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THE EXPEDIENCY, PREDICTION, AND ACCOMPLISH-
MENT OF THE CHRISTIAN REDEMPTION
ILLUSTRATED,

I N

E I G H T S E R M O N S ,

P R E A C H E D B E F O R E T H E

U N I V E R S I T Y O F O X F O R D ,

I N T H E Y E A R M D C C X C I V ,

A T T H E

L E C T U R E

F O U N D E D B Y T H E L A T E

R E V . J O H N . B A M P T O N , M . A .
C A N O N O F S A L I S B U R Y .

B Y T H O M A S W I N T L E , B . D .

O F P E M B R O K E C O L L E G E ,

R E C T O R O F B R I G H T W E L L I N B E R K S H I R E .

O X F O R D :

M D C C X C I V . 1794.

S O L D B Y J . C O O K E ; A L S O B Y T . C A D E L L A N D W . D A V I E S ,
I N T H E S T R A N D ; F . A N D C . R I V I N G T O N , S T .
P A U L ' S C H U R C H - Y A R D ; A N D T . P A Y N E ,
A T T H E M E W ' S - G A T E , L O N D O N .



18431.

IMPRIMATUR,

JOHAN. WILLS,

Vice-CAN. OXON.

WADH. COLL. Sept¹⁶ 29 1794

WILLIS

TO
THE RIGHT REVEREND
AND HONOURABLE
SHUTE BARRINGTON, L.L.D.
LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM,
THE FOLLOWING WORK,
THE GENERAL PLAN OF WHICH
WAS HONOURED WITH HIS
APPROBATION;
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED;
IN GRATEFUL TESTIMONY OF THE MANY
INSTANCES OF ESTEEM AND REGARD,
WHICH HE HAS SHEWN TO
HIS LORDSHIP'S
OBLIGED AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.

ЖИОВ ВІДАНІ
СЛУЖБІ
ЧЕРВНІ

P R E F A C E.

IF we survey the Religion of Jesus in its nature, its principles, its motives, or its end, we shall find it in every view calculated to promote all the social and benevolent virtues, to diffuse peace on earth, and good-will amongst men. And yet that it has often not been attended with these beneficial effects, but has occasioned strife, seditions, schisms, heresies, a spirit of pride, envy, and ill-will, is too notorious from those unhappy controversies, which even from the first ages of Christianity have sadly divided and distressed the Christian World.

The Author of this holy Religion, who knew what was in man, his passions, foibles, prejudices, and infirmities, plainly foresaw this accidental perversion; and being fully con-

vinced how repugnant the tempers and dispositions of men would often be to the righteousness and the peace of God, he suggested to his Disciples, that his Religion, however designed to encourage and recommend the amiable Charities of Life, would in fact produce unnatural discords and the keenest animosities. *Suppose ye, that I am come to give peace on earth ? I tell you, nay, but rather division ; insomuch that a man's foes shall be those of his own household^a.*

NOTES.

But these evils will arise, not from the genuine influence, but the depraved perversion of the design of the Gospel: Men will suffer their natural principles and passions to interfere with the duties and doctrines of Christ ; will not divest themselves of pride and prejudice, in order to qualify themselves for a right acquaintance with true Religion ; but will suffer their lusts too much to warp their un-

^a Compare Matt. x. 34—36. with Luke xii. 51.

derstandings,

derstandings, and to confine them under the captivity of those corrupt inclinations, which betray the reason, pervert the religion, and wound the soul, of a Christian.

To prevent these mischiefs, the remedy, that is commonly applied, often partakes too much of the very evils which it is designed to obviate. Would men be persuaded with gentleness and candour to consult the real welfare and happiness of their fellow creatures and fellow Christians, much of that intemperate warmth, with which controversy too frequently abounds, would be avoided. The principle of love would warm their hearts, and give energy to their counsels ; and those that they would wish to reform, would probably listen to their instructions with more readiness, and receive their charitable endeavours with more eagerness.

Though it must be sometimes necessary to

search deeply, and to probe the sore to the bottom, yet perhaps it might be often adviseable to have recourse to more lenient methods, merely to point out the flaw without aggravating it, and to propose the remedy, without marking the necessity of the correction. Certainly there is so much real and vital energy in the true principles of Christianity, that the very offering them in their native and genuine lustre, must strongly recommend them to impartial men, or rather they enforce their own recommendation, and the sober and candid mind must admit their truth, and suffer itself to be guided by their influence ; and even those who labour under any wrong propensity might most probably be won upon and recovered, from a right view of things, hostile only to error in general, and favourable to universal truth.

It was chiefly from a strong sense of the importance of these considerations, that the Author

thor of the following Work endeavoured to offer such a true state of the main points of our holy Religion, as in his judgement the Scripture or Word of God hath clearly proposed for our belief and practice, hath manifestly directed for the due formation and improvement of our hearts in the present life, in order to qualify them for the perfect felicity of the future one. The grand doctrine of the Christian scheme is the recovery of the human nature from Sin and Death, and the reinstatement of it in grace and favour with God by the all-powerful merits and atonement of a Redeemer. It must be entertaining as well as improving to reflect, that this comfortable design has been carried on under the guidance of Divine Providence through all ages of the world: insomuch that the establishment and fall of empires, the whole conduct of the world, and the general scheme of things, the revelations of God's will, and the manifestations of his power, have all been directed with a view to this great end, have

all

all concurred in fulfilling the purpose of God, as the true Christian acknowledges it, in the redemption of mankind through Christ Jesus.

It were to be heartily wished, that men of all descriptions would duly weigh and contemplate these important Truths, would study to divest themselves of pride and partiality and every sinister attachment for this purpose, and would pray to God with the Psalmist, that he would open their minds, that they might see the wonders of his love, and of his law. To minds thus prepared, I flatter myself the following Work, how manifold soever may be its imperfections, would still be productive of important benefits. Throughout the whole I have endeavoured always from the fullest conviction to adhere to the Truth of the Scriptures, to such truth as is generally maintained and taught in that excellent Institution, of which I think myself happy in being a Member, the reformed Church of England. If I
have

have sometimes given my own peculiar sentiments, it has been only where it was conceived the opinions of other men have not been a sufficient guide, chiefly in the sense of some obscure passages in the Old Testament.

In my translation of the Prophecy of Balaam in the second Discourse, the Reader may possibly find some variations from the common translation, which he may be at a loss to account for. I can only observe that I have in general followed the sense of the best Versions, and what I have thought to be most agreeable to the rules of fair and true criticism. There is little doubt to whom the STAR of Balaam ought to be referred: That it has been of old understood of the Messiah must be manifest from an observation of the learned Bp. Patrick on the passage, who says, that so long ago as the time of the Emperor Adrian, this was understood by the generality of the Jews, to be a Prophecy of the Messiah. For they

they followed one, whose name was Choceb, i. e. *the Star*, to whom the famous Doctor, R. Akiba, applied these words of Balaam, and calling him Barchoceb, or the Son of the Star, anointed him their King, and carried a Sword before him, crying, Behold the very King Messiah; which is reported by the Jews in several of their books. This proves at least the sense they entertained of the passage, though they erred so grossly in the application.

Some parts of the cxth Psalm have generally been considered as extremely difficult, if not inexplicable. For the sense that I have affixed to the third verse, the Reader will find the chief of my reasons in the notes. But I would beg leave to observe here, that since that part of the work was printed off, I have discovered an interpretation in the exposition of Father Houbigant, which tends to confirm what I have advanced. I need not give the whole

whole of his argument, but would refer for this to his own Note. In several points however he seems to agree with me in the letter, and sometimes in the interpretation of the Original Text^b. I will just add his translation of the verse, from whence his emendations may be more apparent. “ Tecum magnificè egi in die virtutis tuæ, in monte sancto meo ; ex utero ante Luciferum genui te.”

Whoever would rightly interpret this Psalm should duly and carefully attend to the nature of the Composition, to the change of Persons or Speakers introduced in it, and the direct application of it to the Lord of Glory, or to Christ. I conceive, that Jehovah, who is in-

^b In particular he considers the word נִרְבָּת as a verb of the first person, and adds a Jod at the end. Also he reads with Symachus בַּהֲרֵי in my mountain, or in the mountains of holiness, meaning Sina and Horeb, instead of בַּחֲדֵרִי in the splendors or beauties. The difficulty in the last line of לֹא טָל he seems to cut off, rather than reconcile, by supposing, and attempting to account for it as an interpolation.

troduced

troduced as solemnly declaring the priestly office of the Messiah in the fourth verse, hath also intimated his Covenant with him, and his extraordinary qualifications for the Mediatorial authority in the third. As this exposition appears to be important, it is hoped it will be fairly and candidly examined. I am not aware of any objections to it, but what may be easily reconciled with that inattention to grammatical accuracy, which is observable in the Oriental writings ; and there are other passages in the Old Testament, which are applicable to the Messiah only, as well as this. Origen recounts several of this sort, such as Gen. xlix. 10. Psalm xlvi. Isa. lii. and liii. Micah v. 2. to which may be added Daniel's Prophecy of the LXX weeks in the three last verses of ch. ix. and several passages in the xxiid. and lxixth Psalms. Having had occasion to enlarge the third Discourse, where this subject

ject is treated on, very much with Notes, for this as well as other obvious reasons, I have taken the liberty to divide it into two parts.

I might have illustrated several other prophecies more fully, and perhaps completed the whole Work in a better manner, if I had had more time allowed me. But my Work was brought forward by an unexpected emergency a twelvemonth sooner than was originally designed. On this account I trust the Reader will not be too rigidly exact in criticising it, nor expect more copious illustrations or more minute remarks, than the straitness of the time, together with my other engagements, would admit. I hope the real interests of Christianity may in some small degree be promoted by these Discourses ; and if we reflect on the tempers and dispositions of multitudes around us, on the lukewarmness and indifference of some, the intemperate zeal and forward

forward vanity of others, the innovating and licentious spirit of a third class, perhaps the Ministers of the Gospel were never more loudly called upon than at present, to be explicit and zealous in the true cause of Christ, to endeavour to promote it upon Christian principles and motives, and to maintain that his Gospel *is the power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth*.

• Rom. i. 16.

E X T R A C T
FROM THE
LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT
OF THE LATE
REV. JOHN BAMPTON,
CANON OF SALISBURY.

—“ I give and bequeath my Lands and
“ Estates to the Chancellor, Masters, and
“ Scholars of the University of Oxford for
“ ever, to have and to hold all and singular
“ the said Lands or Estates upon trust, and to
“ the intents and purposes hereinafter men-
“ tioned; that is to say, I will and appoint
“ that the Vice-Chancellor of the University
“ of Oxford for the time being shall take and
b “ receive

“ receive all the rents, issues, and profits
 “ thereof, and (after all taxes, reparations and
 “ necessary deductions made) that he pay all
 “ the remainder to the endowment of eight
 “ Divinity Lecture Sermons, to be establish-
 “ ed for ever in the said University, and to
 “ be performed in the manner following :

“ I direct and appoint, that, upon the first
 “ Tuesday in Easter Term, a Lecturer be
 “ yearly chosen by the Heads of Colleges
 “ only, and by no others, in the room ad-
 “ joining to the Printing-House, between
 “ the hours of ten in the morning and two
 “ in the afternoon, to preach eight Divinity
 “ Lecture Sermons, the year following, at St.
 “ Mary’s in Oxford, between the commence-
 “ ment of the last month in Lent Term, and
 “ the end of the third week in Act Term.”

“ Also I direct and appoint, that the eight
 “ Divinity Lecture Sermons shall be preached
 “ upon either of the following subjects—to
 “ confirm and establish the Christian Faith,
 “ and to confute all heretics and schismatics
 “—upon

“ — upon the divine authority of the Holy
 “ Scriptures — upon the authority of the
 “ writings of the primitive Fathers, as to
 “ the faith and practice of the primitive
 “ Church — upon the Divinity of our Lord
 “ and Saviour Jesus Christ — upon the Divi-
 “ nity of the Holy Ghost — upon the Arti-
 “ cles of the Christian Faith, as compre-
 “ hended in the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds.

“ Also I direct, that thirty copies of the
 “ eight Divinity Lecture Sermons shall be
 “ always printed, within two months after
 “ they are preached, and one copy shall be
 “ given to the Chancellor of the University,
 “ and one copy to the Head of every Col-
 “ lege, and one copy to the Mayor of the
 “ city of Oxford, and one copy to be put
 “ into the Bodleian Library; and the ex-
 “ pence of printing them shall be paid out
 “ of the revenue of the Land or Estates given
 “ for establishing the Divinity Lecture Ser-
 “ mons; and the Preacher shall not be paid,
 “ nor be entitled to the revenue, before they
 “ are printed.

“ Also I direct and appoint, that no person shall be qualified to preach the Divinity Lecture Sermons, unless he hath taken the Degree of Master of Arts at least, in one of the two Universities of Oxford or Cambridge; and that the same person shall never preach the Divinity Lecture Sermons twice.”

C O N T E N T S.

S E R M O N I.

The Inability of the human Nature to discover a Deliverance from the fatal Consequences of Sin.

ROMANS vii. 24, 25.

O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.—p. 1.

S E R M O N II.

Intimations of a Deliverer in the early Ages of the World.

ROMANS xi. 26.

— There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

p. 29.

S E R M O N III.

IN TWO PARTS.

Predictions of the Messiah during the regal Government of the Jews.

ACTS iii. 24.

Ye, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

P. 97.

S E R M O N IV.

The Time of the Messiah's coming, as noted by the later Prophets.

MALACHI iii. 1.

Behold, I will send my Messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his Temple; even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

P. 109.

SER-

S E R M O N V.

The Insufficiency of former Revelations, and
the Delay of the Christian considered.

ROMANS viii. 3.

For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. p. 143.

S E R M O N VI.

The Death of Christ an expiatory Sacrifice.

HEBREWS ix. 26.

--He appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. p. 175.

S E R M O N VII.

The Influence of the Gospel on the Christian Life.

JOHN xv. 3.

Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. p. 211.

S E R M O N V I I I .

The Effects of Christ's Intercession.

HEBREWS vii. 25.

*Wherefore he is able also to save them to the
uttermost, that come unto God by him, see-
ing he ever liveth to make intercession for
them.*

p. 245.

S E R M O N . I.

ROMANS vii. 24, 25.

O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SAIN T Paul in this part of his Epistle, addressing himself to the Jews at Rome, vindicates the Law of Moses from any unjust imputation, on account of the ceremonial usages which it recommended, and which are abolished by the purity of the Gospel. *Is the Law Sin*, which directed these observances? *God forbid**! Nay, some moral duties are enforced by the legal rites and the superadded precepts in so convincing a manner, that in a comparative sense at least, the Sin, or transgression of them, without the Law, would

* Ver. 7.

B

have

have been considered as dead. Hence those who were ignorant of the Law, or the Jews in their pristine state, so far as they were unacquainted with it, may be presumed to have lived without it. And to these the Apostle seems to allude, when he speaks thus in his own person; *I was alive without the Law once*, that is, before it was given by Moses; *but when the commandment came, Sin revived, and I died*^b.

Yet the Law, which introduced this sense of things, was in itself perfectly right and holy; and it was Sin only that made it productive of mischief. It was Sin which perverted the institutions of Heaven, the perfect will of God, and thereby wrought death in men. And that Sin should thus gain the ascendancy over us, and render us obnoxious to death, cannot appear strange in this fallen state of our nature, if we reflect on the opposition which is between the natural man and the Law. *For we know, that the Law is spiritual*, are fully convinced that it is pure,

^b Ver. 9.

and

and quite averse to all iniquity; *but I am carnal, sold under sin*: such is the nature of the merely natural or carnal man, that he is an habitual slave to his corrupt affections and sinful inclinations, even against the dictates of the Law, and the better suggestions of his own mind.

Sin is evidently the malignant poison, whose pernicious influence is traced in this whole chapter; a contagion with which the human race, even from our primeval state, has ever been sadly infested. It will be unnecessary to follow the Apostle's argumentation farther, or to pursue the conflict, which he so minutely marks, between the power of sin, and the checks of conscience, or the remonstrances of the better principle in the mind. It may be more to our purpose to observe, that his reasoning has by some interpreters been understood literally, and as meant chiefly of himself; by others, though spoken of himself, yet applicable to another description of men. Some refer it altogether to the carnal state;

* Ver. 14.

' B 2

others

others extend it in part at least to the regenerate: so that the allusion may be presumed to intend the general condition of human nature, affected either in a greater or less degree by the perplexing influence of Sin.

I rather favour this latter opinion; not only from the general scope of his reasoning, and the expressions which he uses, such as, *It is no more I that do it, but Sin that dwelleth in me^a*, and *I delight in the Law of God after the inward man^c*, and *with the mind I serve the Law of God^f*; but even from the result of it in the question of the text. Since certain it is from the context, that the misery here lamented is that wretched thralldom to which the human nature is subject from the power and consequences of Sin: which, however it may be mortified or kept under in our renewed natures, cannot be so intirely subdued, but that some remains will adhere to the very best of us, whilst we continue in the body: enough to induce us seriously to distrust ourselves under the just go-

^a Ver. 17.

^c Ver. 22.

^f Ver. 25.

vernment

vernment of an infinitely wise and holy God, and with an earnest and thankful perseverance to seek after the full benefit of that deliverance, which He hath wrought for us through Jesus Christ our Lord.

To understand the nature of this deliverance, it will be necessary to advert briefly to the poignancy and baneful effects of the evil, from which we would desire to be delivered ; to *the body of this death*, or, according to the marginal reading, *this body of death*, involving in it a combination of the occasion, as well as of the effect and pressure of this aggravated calamity.

And here the first reflection that will offer is, that Sin is the cause of death ; for the dissolution of our bodies, however we call it a payment of the debt of nature, is more properly our receiving *the wages of Sin*^s ; inasmuch as we are assured by the holy Scripture, that man created for immortality was placed in the Paradise of God ; till by his transgression he fell

^s Rom. vi. 23.

from that happy state, was cast out to labour and sorrow, and doomed to return to the dust from whence he was taken^b.

To this might be added, that as by the Sin of one man Death first entered into the world, and the inexorable decree passed upon us all, so we too often hasten the execution of it by our several offences. Would we *eschew evil, and do goodⁱ*, length of days might yet be the portion of many among us. But by indolence and intemperance, by anger, envy, and lewdness we contract our span; and, though our life be indeed short enough for the business we have to do, render it much shorter, either by doing nothing, or by doing what ought not to be done. And hence also we frequently craze a healthy constitution, lay in food for restless thoughts and distempered humours, and treasure up sorrows to aggravate the infirmity of our latter days. Thus is Sin the cause of death, and of its usual

^b Gen. iii. 19.

ⁱ Pet. iii. 11.

harbingers,

harbingers, decay and disease, and all the afflicting preparatives of our dissolution^k.

But this is not all ; for under *the body of this death* we must consider Sin especially, as that pernicious bane which arms death with its terror, upon account of which its approaches are generally so dreadful to mankind; as that which gives it a power to pierce even to the inmost recesses of their minds, to overwhelm them in the extreme agony of nature with the insupportable burden of *a wounded spirit*^l, and threatens them with a separation infinitely more grievous than a bare disuniting their souls from their bodies, an entire separation of their souls from God. So that they are *through the fear of death all their life-time subject to bondage*^m; and, when the last struggle for life is over, depart with an anxious distrust that *the bitterness of death*

^k I need not add, says Bp. Patrick on Gen. ii. 17. that diseases, sicknesses, and pains, the forerunners of death, are included in this threatening, "Thou shalt surely die."

^l Prov. xviii. 14.

^m Heb. ii. 15.

is ^a not yet *past*; but that there may still be a final destruction both of soul and body, called in the language of Scripture *the second death*^b, or death eternal.

Had we no deliverance given us by God, this triumph of death over human nature would be but an uncomfortable subject. But since we are now enabled by Him to become indeed *more than conquerors*^c, we may without horror survey the various scene of our conflict and defeat; from the time when men were first exposed naked to the assaults of the grand adversary of mankind; what arts have been applied to elude or alleviate their thralldom, what efforts to recover their liberty; and how Sin has ever baffled their attempts, and driven them from all the confidence in which they trusted, till through Jesus Christ our Lord they were restored to the glorious freedom of the sons of God, and invited to a better Paradise, to an eternal inheritance reserved in heaven for us.

^a 1 Sam. xv. 32. ^b Rev. xx. 14. ^c Rom. viii. 37.

Nor

Nor will this view of our natural condition be an unprofitable amusement; from the sight of our danger we shall discern the greatness of our deliverance, from the sense of human weakness we shall be led to admire the power of divine grace; and the more deeply we are convinced that our own arm could not help us, the more effectually we shall be excited to return our praises to Him, whose right hand hath wrought for us *so great salvation*⁴.

Let us then consider death, as what it must appear to all men, the period of the present state of our existence; and remark what consequences they have drawn, and with what consolations they have endeavoured to support themselves, under the expectation of such an important event.

*Let us eat and drink, and enjoy the day, for to-morrow we die*⁵. This is the conclusion

⁴ Heb. ii. 3.

⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 32. The same expression is used by Isaiah, ch. xxii. 13. The prophet intimates, that, instead of looking up to the Maker of their city in the time of its siege, the Jews would indulge every kind of riot and excess: when he called to weeping and mourning, *bebold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, killing*

of men of superficial thoughts, ungoverned appetites, and degenerate minds; whose only method of loosing themselves from the ties of religion is, tamely to submit to the chain of necessity; and when they have first discarded their reason, that they may live like brutes, suborn their reason to give evidence, that like brutes they shall perish. “Our life is “short and tedious, say they, and in the “death of man there is no remedy, neither “was there any man known to return from “the grave. For we are born at all adventure; and we shall be hereafter as though “we had never been: for the breath in our

killing sheep; or their conduct would be altogether like those Pagans who looked for death, as the final termination of all their hopes and enjoyments, as well as of their present existence. Such principles are generally ascribed to the Epicureans: and Cicero, in describing the Epicurean tenets, thus observes; Nullam enim novisisti, nisi profectam a corpore, et redeuntem ad corpus, animi voluptatem. De Nat. Deor. I. i. 40. But, according to Herodotus, we find the like notions entertained in the more cultivated parts of Egypt long before the time of Epicurus. He tells us, b. ii. 78. that, at their convivial entertainments, the Egyptians introduced the figure of a dead man, which was carried round on a bier to each of the guests; who was reminded to look on it, and drink and enjoy himself, as he was to become, after his death, like that wooden image. See also the speech of Vibius Gallus. Liv. I. 26. 13.

“ nostrils

“ nostrils is as smoke, and a little spark in the
“ moving of our heart: which being extin-
“ guished, our body shall be turned into ashes,
“ and our spirit shall vanish as the soft air.
“ Our time is a very shadow that passeth
“ away; and after our end there is no return-
“ ing: for it is fast sealed, so that no man
“ cometh again. Come on therefore, let us
“ enjoy the good things that are present; let
“ us fill ourselves with costly wine and oint-
“ ments; let us crown ourselves with rose-buds
“ before they be withered, and let none of us
“ go without his part of voluptuousness; for
“ this is our portion, and our lot is this.”

Thus are they represented by the author of the book of Wisdom*, reasoning with themselves, as he expresses it, but in a manner which the very nature of the rational faculty immediately evinces not to be aright. And should it at last appear that, short as our life is, we have no less than an eternal interest at stake, of all men most miserable are these pretenders

* Wisdom ii. 1—9.

to

to gaiety and pleasure. It is deplorable to be in such a case as to be forced to wish the contrary; and then it is intolerable to find that the contrary is impossible to be proved. Nay, it may be questioned whether the highest attainments, the soul of man is capable of receiving in the present life, be a stronger argument, that the present life is not all its portion, but that there must be a future reckoning, than the corruption and baseness of such groveling minds. For why so much pains to degrade and vilify human nature? Is it not, that they may give a full swing to the brutal passions, that they may silence the reproaches of conscience, that they may sin without shame, reluctance, or regret? Whence it must needs follow, as surely as sin implies guilt, and guilt an obligation to pu-

* This opinion, says Bp. Wilkins, is so very gross and ignoble, as that it cannot be sufficiently despised. It doth debase the understanding of man, and all the principles in him that are sublime and generous, extinguishing the very seeds of honour, and piety, and virtue, affording no room for actions or endeavours that are truly great and noble; being altogether unworthy of the nature of man, and doth reduce us to the condition of beasts. Nat. Rel. p. 351.

nishment,

nishment, that the more freely they have gratified their vicious inclinations, the more successful they have been in stifling the inward forebodings of an hereafter, those natural attendants and first avengers of sin in this life, the greater probability, nay, if there be a just God in heaven, the greater necessity there should seem to be, of their undergoing the whole burden of the punishment due unto it in a future state.

And though they may for a while by these mean artifices defer or beguile the fear of dying; yet the more they have fixed their affections on the things here below, the less they will be able to endure the thought that they must shortly leave them. When they have had their share even to satiety; when they are convinced, as most before their departure hence are by sad experience convinced, that this is not the place of their rest; they will with impotent longings still hover over their beloved, their only, treasure. What, though they cannot find rest here, should they be taken hence, they can promise themselves rest no where,
having

having no desire, no relish, scarce any notion of superior spiritual enjoyments.

But to dismiss these, who, after all their swelling words of liberty, are the most abject and confessed slaves both of sin and death, and the security of whose hope is no better than the extremity of despair;—

Others have sought for succour against the fear of death from the power of fame, the views of a posthumous reputation, and comforted themselves with the apprehension of surviving the short period of their nature in the more durable annals of time, in the admiration and applause of distant generations. This, it must be acknowledged, is the effect of a noble instinct, has been the cause of many glorious achievements, is no inconsiderable proof, or rather is an auspicious presage, of a more real immortality.

Yet how miserably has this excellent principle been perverted by sin to the worst purposes of a criminal ambition, nay of a sordid avarice!

avarice! The darling prospect of being eter-nized by a solemn deification with all the pomp of statues and victims, was an irresistible tem-p-tation to the great giants of violence, those *men of renown*^u in ancient days. The more humble imagination of having their titles de-livered down to future ages with the flattering addition of mighty conquerors, has been for heroes of later date a sufficient motive to jus-tify their divesting themselves of all humanity, and sacrificing multitudes to the idol of their honour. And if we turn our eyes upon cha-racters in lower life; why this penurious gri-ping, this oppression and defrauding even in those who are past the season of enjoyment? but to raise a family, or a sumptuous fabric, to say *their houses shall continue for ever, to call their lands after their own names*^x, or to

^u Gen. vi. 4. *which were of old, men of renown.* The expres-sion מִנְיָם, translated *of old*, properly denotes the obscurity of any distant period of time, and may refer to what is future, as well as what is past. The *men of renown* need not therefore be confined to the generations before the flood.

^x Ps. xl ix. 11. "This their way is their folly, and those that see it are such fools to take after them." So Bp. Lloyd on this place. See his funeral Sermon at the end of Wilkins's Nat. Rel. p. 9; where are many judicious remarks on the subject we are here treating.

find

find a refuge from the obscurity of the grave in the stateliness of a sepulchre. So that perhaps it were better men could be contented to be forgotten, than thus labour to rescue themselves from oblivion by such infamous or ridiculous memorials.

But let us suppose this principle to take its right direction, to spur men on to distinguish themselves by the invention or improvement of useful arts, by the achievements of virtuous bravery, and works of a true magnificence. *A good name* indeed thus acquired is as *precious ointment*^y, will embalm their memory, and transmit it with a grateful odour to succeeding times.

Yet still a few *dead flies*^x will taint this precious ointment; a man's vices will probably be remembered at least as long as his virtues; and what though his public conduct has gained him the most favourable verdict at the tribunal of fame, if his secret sins condemn him at the bar of his own mind! A good charac-

^x Eccles. vii. 1.

^y Eccles. x. 1.

ter

ter without a good conscience will be but a sorrowful comforter at the hour of death ; and after all, how much soever men may triumph in the thoughts of having purchased a bright reversion in futurity, and boast that their better part is placed beyond the power of the grave, if this better part be nothing but a Name, here is only the empty shadow of a deliverance.

Still, there are those whose researches and penetration have opened the way to a more substantial conquest: the body, it is true, they yield up to corruption; that material building they perceive too weak to withstand the perpetual shocks of time; they know it must soon be reduced to a ruinous heap, and submit to the common vicissitudes of the material world. But that which thinks and wills, which reflects and reasons within them, this they can demonstrate must be in its nature an indivisible being, and exempt from all possibility of suffering by any dissolution. This they experience in its operations unconfined to the narrow limits of place and time, capable of extending

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its ideas beyond the bounds of matter, of abstracting itself from the objects of sense, of conversing in an intellectual world, and gradually advancing, and therefore why not eternally advancing? in the increase of wisdom and virtue. This they feel ever restless and dissatisfied with all things here below, its desires disproportioned to temporal enjoyments, its hopes full of immortality. This then they conclude must remain unhurt by the stroke of death; and when that enemy has seized their earthly tabernacle, this, their souls, all that is properly themselves, shall retire, only less gross and encumbered, to wander at large in the great world of spirits, or to be more intimately united to their pure Original.

These are certainly reflections of great weight, considered in themselves, to banish the fear of dying; yet is the force of them very much weakened, or rather I might say, the argument is turned with its whole force against us, by our sins. Were we defiled by no sinful corruption, were we to account for
no

no personal transgression, had we always employed our faculties according to the will of our Creator, our improvement in every ennobling quality would then have kept pace with our duration ; and the consciousness that our better part had drawn vigour and brightness from that time, which wears out the strength and beauty of the body, and was still bringing forth more fruit in our age, might rationally preclude every misgiving apprehension, that a soul thus ardent with confirmed love, adorned with increasing graces, and aspiring to the perfection of virtue, could suffer any disadvantageous change from the natural dissolution of our material frame. Could we thus maintain the integrity of our ways before God, we might well say with holy Job, *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him*^a.

But now if the very best amongst us must take up those other words of his, *I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee, O thou Preserver of men*^b ! where is the mighty point

^a Job xiii. 15.

^b Ch. vii. 20.

gained by conjecturing, or even by demonstrating, that the period of our present state will only be the commencement of another kind of existence, if we must still doubt, whether it will be a happier, if we may justly dread, it will be a more miserable kind of existence. Men may discourse as they please upon the excellence of the human soul; the more excellent a being the soul of man is, the greater is the baseness and ingratitude of Sin: and let the soul be as excellent as they please, yet happy it cannot be without the favour of God; and *God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*^c. And if even here, *when He turns his face from us, we are troubled*^d; though here the common blessings of his Providence, and the busines and amusements of life, prevent our being thoroughly sensible of the misery of that dereliction; when we go hence, should Sin then separate between us and our God, we may endure, but we must be undone, for ever.

Thus if with the eye only of natural rea-

^c Hab. i. 13.

^d Psal. xxx. 7.

son we look toward *the valley of the shadow of death*^c, where clouds and darkness do not entirely intercept a farther prospect, righteousness and judgment will meet our view; a righteousness by which *no man living can be justified*^f, a judgment, in which the most perfect of the sons of men must stand condemned. Having *all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God*^e, if the strength of our excellency be not wholly departed from us, it remains only like *the staff of a bruised reed, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it*^g: even so is the immortality of the soul with the defilement and guilt of Sin.

Since then our own reason is thus deficient, our own natural powers thus incapable of affording us any sufficient support, *to whom shall we go*ⁱ for aid, or whither shall we fly for relief? If we have recourse to the ages that are past for instruction, we shall find that the general bent of human nature has always

^c Psal. xxiii. 4.

^e Rom. iii. 23.

ⁱ John vi. 68.

^f Psal. cxliii. 2.

^g Isa. xxxvi. 6.

been to call in the aids of religion to assist our reason; or to apply to the Author of our nature for help, where we are so plainly unable to help ourselves. Religion in its very name implies a professed relation to the divine Being, and if it be founded upon true principles, must represent Him under the notion of an Almighty *Rewarer to them who diligently seek him*^k. But if this reward be a deliverance from death, from what has been before laid down, it will follow, that the religion which proposes it, should propose also some method of deliverance from Sin.

Now if we take a brief survey of the chief religions that have appeared in the world, we may soon discover what measures have been pursued in this important respect.

As for the pagan superstition, which claims for its followers so large a share of the human race, it is notorious that their religious ceremonies, however diversified, were in general disgraced with sad corruptions and the wildest extravagancies. The worship they paid their

^k Heb. xi. 6.

gods

gods was replete with absurdity, was dis-honourable to the divine nature as well as their own. The light that was in them was darkness, and the doctrines they taught were polluted with the grossest errors and most abominable idolatries. *Professing themselves wise they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and the four-footed beasts, and reptiles*¹ of the earth.

Wherefore God gave them up unto vile affections, to work all uncleanness with greediness^m: so that their practice was altogether of a cast suitable to their darkened minds and erroneous principles. They were even dead in trespasses and sinsⁿ; and the most enormous crimes were sometimes recommended by the example, and consecrated by the authority of their leading men. We must not look therefore to the worshippers of Baal for a remedy against Sin, nor where men degrade themselves below the beasts of the earth can we expect to learn the

¹ Rom. i. 22, 23.

^m Rom. i. 26. Ephes. iv. 19.

ⁿ Ephes. ii. 1.

methods, by which we may be reconciled to an offended Deity.

If we consult the Law of Moses, we shall discover greater light indeed, but shall still be at a loss for a real deliverance from Sin. As I mean to advert to this inquiry in a future discourse^o, I need only to observe here, that the tenour of this Law required a perfect and unflinching obedience, intimating *that the man who doeth these things*, that is, observes the precepts of moral and original righteousness, *should live by them*^p, and that *cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the Law to do them*^q. Hence it could never make the comers thereunto perfect as pertaining to the conscience^r; but the commandment, which was ordained to life, through the corruption and depravity of our nature, *was found to be unto death*^s.

From this short view then it appears, that Sin was generally encouraged by the Heathen

^o See Lect. v.

^p Lev. xviii. 5. Rom. x. 5.

^q Gal. iii. 10. ^r Heb. x. 1. ix. 9. ^s Rom. vii. 10.

worship;

worship; was condemned indeed, but rather aggravated than abolished, by the Jewish Law; and, as we shall see hereafter, was fully expiated and perfectly atoned for only in the Christian institution^c.

I would by no means be thought to intimate, that all men under the former dispensations, though they lived in the fear of God, yet died without hopes of his favour. No, the immaculate *Lamb was slain* in the divine decree even *from the foundation of the world*^a. Abraham believed God, and relied on his promises, which was *imputed to him for righteousness*^b. Many

^c I have taken no notice here of the religion of Mahomet, because our concern is chiefly with those schemes of religion, which were prior to the Christian dispensation. Our inquiry being only after a remedy for sin, when that remedy is discovered, the pursuit is of course at an end. It may be proper however just to observe with respect to the Mahometan delusion, that among other strong arguments against it, derived from the inconsistencies, falsehoods, and ridiculous fables that are to be found in the Koran, we may add the mean and carnal gratifications, which it proposes as its rewards. The low indulgence of the senses is a pursuit, which tends to debase the mind, and sink it into the mere animal nature, and consequently must be favourable to the cause of sin, instead of assisting to relieve us from it.

^a Rev. xiii. 8.

^b Rom. iv. 22.

of

of the Jewish nation carried their views beyond the land of Canaan to better things in another country ; nor can it be doubted but some even of those who were strangers to all covenanted promises, if they did not live without God in the world, might take sanctuary in that mercy and compassion, which appear in all his works. But then the method in which that compassion should be applied, the price by which those better things should be purchased, the ground of those mighty hopes on which the patriarchs relied, was a mystery of godliness hidden in a great measure from the preceding ages and generations, till, the work of our Redemption being actually accomplished, it became a principal part among the distinguishing articles of the Christian Faith.

There were indeed before some bright conjectures, some dawning of a glorious expectation. And it will be the next part of our design to point out some of these gradual discoveries; not only to demonstrate the attention, which was paid to the earlier ages of the world, but to convince those who live in these latter days,

days, that all the schemes of Providence from the beginning of things were working together for their conviction and benefit.

But whatever favours were granted to those of old time, they were only as *a light shining in a dark place*^x; and life and immortality were never brought into open light, till *the Sun of righteousness appeared with healing in his wings*^y. And He alone was worthy to bring these tidings to a sinful world, who alone was able to make them *good tidings of great joy*^z, because he alone was able to take away the sins of the world: *who died for our offences, and rose again for our justification*^a; and to whom all judgment being committed, *there can be no condemnation for those who truly are in him*^b. Nor hath he only delivered us from the terrors and consequences of death, but opened to us the blissful treasures of eternity; even of that eternal life, *which God, who cannot lie, pro-*

^x 2 Pet. i. 19.

^y Mal. iv. 2.

^z Luke ii. 10.

^a Rom. iv. 25.

^b Rom. viii. 1.

mised

mised before the world began^c, but in due time manifested through the preaching of the Gospel.

It must suffice at present to offer only these general hints of our deliverance by Christ, as the more full illustration of them in the expediency, prediction, and accomplishment of our Redemption, is the chief design of the work in which we are engaged.

^c Tit. i. 2. See also 1 Pet. i. 20. and 2 Tim. i. 9.

S E R-

S E R M O N II.

ROMANS xi. 26.

—*Tbere shall come out of Sion the Deliverer,
and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.*

IF we attend to our best reflections and purest sentiments, we shall readily perceive that the mind of man is much delighted with order and beauty, and greatly dissatisfied with irregularity and confusion. The truth of which observation is no less manifest in the disposition of things according to their moral character, than in the constitution of them in the natural system. Every rational and thinking person must look with pleasure and admiration on the beauty of Holiness, and with equal disgust and aversion on the deformity of Sin.

Now

Now as these opposite qualities appear either amiable or odious to our own nature, to our own unprejudiced and dispassionate minds, we may reasonably conclude they will appear in like manner to the most perfect understanding of the Author of our nature, to that all-wise Being, who hath formed the constitution of us and of all things. God must delight in the contemplation of virtue, or in seeing his rational creatures perform the ends and purposes for which he designed them ; and He must be *of purer eyes than to behold evil*, or with any degree of complacence *to look upon iniquity* *.

And yet we find the disposition of man far departed from moral rectitude, and quite unlike what it must have originally been, when it proceeded from the hand of its wise Master-builder and gracious Architect ; our understandings oftentimes betrayed by prejudice, and our wills misled by caprice and humour ; reason too frequently subjected to passion, and the rule of right compelled to yield to the

* Hab. i. 13.

impulse

impulse of appetite or inclination. Nor can we be otherwise therefore, whilst in this state of deformity, than objects of displeasure to Him, who hath declared his wrath by various notices *against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*^b.

That in this deplorable condition of our being our own arm could not save us, or that the best powers of the human mind by their unassisted exertions could avail but little in discovering a deliverance from Sin, hath been evinced in my last Discourse. From whence also was manifested the necessity of some superior Aid, some supernatural Deliverer, to rescue us from that guilt and pollution, which have proved so general and dreadful to mankind.

Indeed all ages have perceived and bewailed this degeneracy; and as all have needed, so all have in consequence been solicitous for a remedy. From God alone our relief must proceed: and from his bounty we may con-

^b Rom. i. 18.

clude,

clude, and have seen some general intimations, that none of the generations of men were left without a suitable recourse to that relief, which his wisdom would design, and his goodness provide, for the distresses of his creatures.

To the earlier ages this remedy was discovered imperfectly and gradually. But yet no sooner had our first parents revolted and apostatized from God, than some dawning appeared of a reconciliation. When the curse was pronounced on the original seducer, the cause and the source of all our woe, it was at the same time intimated, that the Seed of the woman should bruise the Serpent's head^c. Implacable enmity was to subsist between them, between Satan and the human race; but one born of the woman at length should conquer; or however assailed in the attempt, should completely triumph, and bring salvation to the whole of Adam's posterity. The promise was now general, when no distinctions could have occurred, when none of his descendants were born, and the tradition would

^c Gen. iii. 15.

doubtless

doubtless be handed down to all succeeding generations. So that as soon as in Adam all died, intimation was given of a covenant, that in the Seed of the Woman all should be made alive^d.

Nor let it be conceived, however favourable to the deceit of a vain philosophy, that the curse then expressed in such full and solemn language was meant to be confined to the mere animal only, to the aversion which is commonly observed between man and the serpent race. Even in that concise history such circumstances are related, as cannot be understood in a literal sense, and a comparison of the passage with other portions of Scripture must compel us in many parts of it to adopt the figurative or mystical. For we read that the Serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety^e; and that the Woman being deceived

^d 1 Cor. xv. 22.

^e Gen. iii. 13. 2 Cor. xi. 3. It is probably for this reason, that our Saviour says of the Devil, he was a murderer from the beginning, and a liar, and the father of it. John viii. 44. St. John observes likewise, that the Devil sinneth from the beginning; and immediately subjoins, as if he had an eye to the first seduction, and the promise in consequence of it: For this

was in the transgression^f. In the book of the Revelations it is *the old Serpent that was called the Devil and Satan, that deceiveth the whole world; who was cast out into the earth, and his Angels were cast out with him^g.*

In what sense also we are to interpret the Seed of the woman, may be learnt from the use of the expression in subsequent parts of the book of Genesis^h, as well as from its general turn and scope in other parts of the

purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil. 1 John iii. 8. And as our Lord had power over the wicked spirits in himself, so he appears to have conferred it on his faithful servants, on those that spoke in his name, and acted under his immediate commission. Which considerations will help us to explain that passage of St. Luke x. 18, 19. *I beheld Satan, says Christ, as lightning fall from heaven, de-throned of all his dominion and sovereignty in the world by the manifestation of the Son of God;* so that, as we read in the book of the Revelations, xii. 8. *no more place was found in heaven for the Dragon and his angels.* He then adds, *Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the force of the enemy.* Evil spirits were to be dispossessed by them; and all the malice of the Devil, and of the serpents and scorpions, his infernal coadjutors, was to be subdued, and made subject unto them. From all these considerations there can be little doubt of the true sense of the allusion before us.

^f 1 Tim. ii. 14.

^g Ch. xii. 9.

^h See ch. iv. 25. xv. 3. xxxviii. 8, 9. See also Gal. iii. 16.

Bible. And indeed unless we understand the passage alluded to in the sense of a prediction, or, that in the combat Christ should despoil the Devil of his sovereignty, it is scarce possible to give it any meaning, suitable to the language in which it is delivered, much less to the awful interposition of that Almighty Being, whose offended majesty occasioned its deliverance.

During the continuance of the old world we have perhaps no other direct Revelation recorded, of the design of God by an atonement to restore man to his favour. But yet we read that sacrificesⁱ were offered to the Almighty, which were doubtless intended to deprecate his wrath, and as preludes of his future mercy ; and that, out of tender love to man, provision was made for his clothing^k, probably from the skins of those beasts which

ⁱ Sacrifices seem to have been instituted, as symbols of the covenant made with man : and from slaying the victim, the making a covenant is expressed by the word כָּרַב, to cut it, or cut it off. So ὥρια τεμνειν, and ferire fœdus.

^k Gen. iii. 21.

were slain in sacrifices¹. Men were also engaged to call on the name of the Lord^m; and one of the patriarchs, the seventh from Adamⁿ, was exempted from the common lot of mortality^o, immediately accepted of God, and translated into the regions of the blessed.

After the flood we find early instances of God's renewing his gracious promise of reconciliation, as well as more particular discoveries of the mode in which it would be conveyed. The chief of these discoveries were made to a selected race of men, but some were of a more general communication, as intended for all men. It may be proper in the first place to attend to the more distinguished of the former; and then, secondly, to take a view of the latter. And I shall confine myself chiefly to those that were prior to the full

¹ The expression to Cain, Gen. iv. 7. probably looked at an expiation: *If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?* or as it is rendered in Jonathan's Targum, *shalt not thy sin be forgiven thee?* *And if thou dost not well, sin lieth at the door,* thy sin is reserved for punishment at the day of Judgment, will remain unexpiated, and be chargeable to thee at the final account.

^m Gen. iv. 26. ⁿ Jude 14. ^o Gen. v. 24. Heb. xi. 5.
establishment

establishment of the Jewish commonwealth in the present Discourse^{P.}.

I. The promise, that was originally made to the Seed of the woman, was afterwards limited to the Seed of Abraham. With this holy man the Almighty appears to have often conversed by the Word of his majesty, or the Son of his love, imparting unto him his counsels and the designs of his providence; to have

^P It is hoped no persons will conceive disgust at any of the topics here alledged, because they may have been often handled by other writers. For if the present cast of their form, and call of the argument, will not sufficiently plead in their favour, I would beg leave to subjoin a passage taken from a Discourse of one of my predecessors in this Lecture, the learned Professor White. "It is not necessary," says this ingenious writer, "in the present situation of things, to attempt any new arrangement of proofs, or system of evidence. It will be time enough to invent some fresh modes of demonstration, when it is found that the old are incapable of affording conviction to the honest and impartial enquirer after truth. The nature of evidence however depends in a great measure on the manner in which it is considered; and the same arguments and illustrations will appear in very different lights of strength and conviction, according to our various modes of study and habits of reflection." P. 40.—As old and often refuted objections are continually vamped up, with some small alterations in their dresses, it is surely enough, if the answers be so far varied, as to reach the objections in every shape.

entered into a sacred covenant or engagement with him, promising him, as a reward for his piety, various distinguished and apposite blessings, that he would take his posterity also under his peculiar care, in order to oblige the whole family from the prospect of their comforts to a sincere and persevering obedience.

But the most valuable consolation of all was, that *in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed*^a; because he had obeyed the voice of the Almighty, in not withholding his only son from him; because he was strong in faith, and even *against hope believed in hope*^b, being confident that God would fulfil his promise which he had made, that *In Isaac shall thy seed be called*^c. The sense of which passage the Apostle St. Paul will lead us thus to interpret: *Now unto Abraham and his seed were the promises made; He saith not, unto seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ*^d. So great indeed was the confidence of this pious patriarch, as

^a Gen. xxii. 18.

^b Gen. xxi. 12.

^c Rom. iv. 18.

^d Gal. iii. 16.

to

to enable him to look forward to the expected blessing, and to exult in it; for he rejoiced to see the day of the Deliverer, *and he saw it, and was glad*⁴.

The history of Abraham contains many signal notices of the promised redemption. The birth, the intended sacrifice, and the escape of Isaac, with the concomitant circumstances, are such manifest types of the Messiah, that they can scarce be mistaken by any, who have lived in these latter days, and have impartially considered the events which they were meant to foreshew. And however it may be conceived that these types were but of little benefit to the times in which they were transacted, yet if we consider the conviction that was wrought in Abraham, and his paternal regard to the instruction of his dependants; if we reflect also on the general use of symbolical representations^x, and the constant mode of

⁴ John viii. 56.

^x Having just touched on symbols, and being sensible that the frequent use of them in the earlier, and their abuse in the later, times of the Old Testament, may make it expedient to take some little notice of them, I shall here subjoin the following remarks.

instruction by significant emblems in those early ages, we shall probably be inclined to

The descriptions of things appear to have been at first very simple, and there were probably but few words to denote them; not more simple words, or possibly not so many, as individual or single images. But human nature being fond of novelty, or tired with the repetition of the same sound, began to vary the expression by the substitution of complex characters. Resemblances also furnishing a chief source of variation, hence proceeded the analogy of metaphor, or allegory. Allegories were often intimated by symbols; and the variety at length was probably so great, that through the inattention of men, or such like cause, the primitive ideas were sometimes so far affected, as to be mistaken, changed, or lost.

From this abuse of things, evidently designed for the relief and comfort of mankind, many sad evils may be supposed to have taken their origin; and among the rest, that pernicious and fatal one of transferring the honour and reverence, due only to the Creator, to those signs or representations of him, which the fancy or imitative faculty of man had substituted in his stead. The undistinguishing vulgar paid the honour to the substitute, which by the priest or the philosopher was meant for the Deity; till the original object was lost in the emblem, the divine nature forgotten or sunk in the idol, and the Creator excluded by the worship of the creature; which was at first meant only as his representative.

But notwithstanding this accidental perversion and abuse, in compliance with the general bent of the early ages, we find in Scripture many very important events denoted by symbols, and conveyed in types and presignifications, calculated not only for the benefit of those persons to whom they were immediately communicated, but chiefly with a reference to future and distant times, and so as to become of perpetual use and advantage.

think

think them of considerable advantage to animate the hope of those generations, whose faith was rested on the expectation of a deliverer to come.

To Jacob, one of the grandsons of Abraham, the family appears to have been again specified, with some peculiar additions and advantages. *Thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south ; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed*¹. This was part of the revelation communicated to this renowned patriarch by God's own declaration. And near the close of his life he bequeathed the like spiritual blessing in more ample terms, and with minuter appropriations to one of his sons. He saith to Judah, *Thou art he, whom thy brethren shall praise ; thy hand shall be on the neck of thine enemies ; thy father's children*

¹ Gen. xxviii. 14. The blessing was also promised to Isaac, and this reason assigned for it, Gen. xxvi. 5, ‘because that Abraham obeyed my voice; and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.’

shall

shall bow down before thee. The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be^z.

Judah shall subsist as a tribe, having distinguished honours, and a constitution of government or dominion belonging to it, at least of a juridical nature, until the Messiah come: for so is the word Shiloh understood by almost all interpreters, by the earlier Targums, the Talmud, and general acceptations of the Jews, and according to the best senses which can be affixed to it in the ancient versions. It is derived indeed from various sources^a; but all seem to agree in assigning to it some property or attribute, corresponding with the high dignity or merciful character of the Saviour of the world. To whom shall be the gathering or obedience of the people, or the peoples and nations shall be gathered to his obedience.

^z Gen. xlix. 8. 10.

^a See Bp. Newton on the Prophecies, Diff. iv.

It

It cannot fall within the compass of my design to point out a minute illustration of the various particulars in these several prophecies, or to insist on them farther than may serve to evince the truth and meaning of the predictions, the ground of that expectation which was afforded to the old world, and their general reference to the times of the Gospel.

In what manner this particular prophecy hath been fulfilled has been often shewn by able and judicious writers. Some even of the modern Jews allow, that it relates to the Messiah; though they will not acknowledge it to have been fulfilled in Jesus. The extraordinary care, that was taken to keep Judah a distinct tribe, appears from various passages in the Old Testament, from that attention which was paid to their registers and genealogies, and the muster or enrolment of their soldiers ^b. And yet these genealogical books are now lost; and there is so far from any dominion or judicial authority left among the Jews, that

^b See 1 Sam. xi. 8. 2 Sam. xxiv. 9. 2 Chron. xii. 15. and Bp. Kidder's Dem. P. iii. p. 132, &c.

they

they are every where a vague and dispersed people, and even the distinction of their tribes can be ascertained no longer. That they have long continued, and must still remain, in this state of distress and exile, is well known to Christians, who are able to assign for it a most just cause. They must be sadly perplexed in accounting for the appearances of things in the Jewish history, as well as for the sense and words of this prophecy, who will not confess, that it has a most manifest reference to the appearance of the Messiah, to that promised seed, which was to be derived from Jacob in the line of his son Judah, who in consequence hereof gave name in aftertimes to the descendants of Israel, and from whose loins according to the flesh Christ came, who brought *salvation to the ends of the earth* ^c.

Should we descend still lower to the times of Moses, we shall discover fresh and farther manifestations of God's gracious intentions to redeem his people, and to restore mankind. From

^c Acts xiii. 47.

the

the person of the Deliverer, if we advert to his offices, his prophetic character is thus foretold by this man of God. “ The Lord thy God “ will raise up unto thee a prophet of thy “ brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye “ hearken: and I will put my words in his “ mouth, and he shall speak unto them all “ that I command him; and whosoever will “ not hearken unto my words which he shall “ speak in my name, I will require it of “ him⁴;” or, as the Seventy read, take ven-geance of him.

It has been attempted ^c to shew, by an unwarrantable perversion of a very simple construction, that the word here rendered *prophet* must have a plural sense; and mean a succession of prophets, which after Moses did arise in the church of God, and continued to reveal the knowledge of his will to the Jews. But let it be remembered, that the primary and most natural interpretation is usually the best; and that we ought not surely to apply a plural sense, unless in a secondary

⁴ Deut. xviii. 15. 18, 19.

^c See Scheme of Literal Prophecy considered, p. 241.

manner,

manner, to a passage which is wholly singular, and capable of a very just explanation as such. If any doubt can remain, of whom the divine oracle speaks in this place, the language of St. Peter in the third chapter of the Acts of the Apostles must intirely remove it; for he quotes this prophecy of Moses, almost in the very words, and directly refers it to Christ^f.

Moreover this prophet was to be like unto Moses; which none in the whole succession of prophets perhaps was, in any such degree, as to call for a particular notice of the similitude; certainly none in which it was so observable and exact, as it was in Christ. Accordingly we find not only at the preaching of John the Baptist a general expectation of a prophet, peculiarly prepared to teach and reform mankind; but upon our Saviour's feeding the multitudes, and displaying the power of his mighty works, this was so like the miraculous supply of manna in the wilderness, and the streams issuing from the stony rock, that the people immediately exclaim, *This is*

^f See also Acts vii. 37. John i. 45.

of

of a truth that prophet that should come into the world^g.

Other offices of the Messiah were prefigured at least in or before the times of Moses. But he is particularly insisted on as a prophet by this great lawgiver, and in that character most explicitly promised by him to the Jews: a character of the highest importance, which was not only to disclose the mysterious events of futurity, but to reveal to sinful men the whole will of God, and instruct them in the way that would lead to endless happiness.

We have hitherto seen sufficient traces marked out of that particular line, in which the promised seed should descend, and one of the principal characters of the Messiah delineated. And though it was undoubtedly evident, that *the Deliverer should come out of Sion*, or the intended *Salvation be of the Jews^h*, yet it was as clearly intimated, that

^g John vi. 14. See also Luke vii. 16.

^h John iv. 22.

in its effects it was meant to be extended to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Nor was the revelation so far confined to the posterity of Judah, but that other nations might also enjoy the benefits of its discovery; which truth I shall now in the second place proceed to establish.

II. Not to repeat that the mercy was clearly foretold to Abraham, and of course would be transmitted to all his descendants; even some manifestations of that covenant, which had been promised to our earliest ancestors, appear to have been again renewed in the first ages after the flood. A Revelation was probably made to Shem, and communicated in the blessing of Noah, *the first preacher of righteousness*¹, to the new world. “Blessed be JE-HOVAH, the God of Shem, and Canaan shall be their servant. God will enlarge Japheth, but will dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be their servant^k.²” JE-

¹ 2 Pet. ii. 5.

^k Gen. ix. 26, 27.

HOVAH

HOVAH was to be the God of Shem in a peculiar sense; and he undoubtedly was so, since he dwelt or tabernacled amongst his posterity. To his descendants as the Messiah was to belong, so all the sons of Noah might from hence be made acquainted with it. And however concise was the tradition, yet it was so pregnant with important consolation, that for this reason it was probably conveyed down to distant ages, and propagated with the sons of men to the remote corners of the earth.

In later times we have upon record some strong intimations of this expected favour, distinguishable for their extraordinary light and clearness, and predicted by inspired men, who were not of the race of Jacob. The land of Uz was probably a part of the stony Arabia, and peopled by the sons of Esau, if not by some of the descendants of Ham. And yet Job, *a perfect and an upright*¹ inhabitant of this country, comforts himself in the midst of his sore distress, with the firm faith that his Redeemer

¹ Job. i. 8.

liveth, in this triumphant language; *Ob! that my words were now written, ob! that they were printed in a book; that they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!* *For I know that my Redeemer, or Deliverer, liveth, and he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin this body be destroyed, yet from my flesh shall I see God*^m. The passage is so solemnly introduced, and of such strong import, so fully expressive of the life of the Deliverer, and the exercise of his glorious prerogative, to summon mankind after their resurrection from the dead before his tribunal, that though the most refined wit of man may have been exercised in the acutest manner to pervert its sense, or evade its force, it has been quite in vain. There seems to be no other just and consistent sense, which the words will bear, considered in their detached, and more especially in their connected stateⁿ.

^m Ch. xix. 23—26.

ⁿ See Bp. Pearson on the Creed, Art. XI. See this point also most fully proved by Mr. Peters, in his Dissert. on the book of Job, part ii. sect. v.

I shall beg leave to subjoin Mr. Peters's Paraphrase of the

25th

The time when Job lived is generally reckoned to have been somewhat prior to Moses ; an opinion which is not objected to even by some of those who disallow the early date of his book. Now if Job himself was the author of it, as the best authorities agree, it is evident that his knowledge of the Redeemer could not have proceeded from the writings of Moses : which presumption is farther strengthened by his entire silence with respect to the Mosaic Law, and its modes of sacrificing. And yet as his work carries evident marks within it of such communications and modes of instruction^{*}, as were vouchsafed to the other writers of the Old Testament, the conclusion is natural, if not necessary, that the author was divinely inspired, and there-

25th and 26th verses. “ For I know, the Vindicator of my innocence and reputation, which you have thus inhumanly attacked, now liveth; and shall live for ever ; and that in some grand future period, he shall arise to judge the dead.—And though after my skin, which you see so miserably affected, this whole frame shall be dissolved and turned to dust ; yet I believe, that I shall live again hereafter, as truly and certainly as I do now, and shall appear personally before my Judge.”

* See especially ch. xxxviii. 1. xlvi. 5.

fore that the knowledge of the Messiah was revealed to persons, who did not belong to the families of Israel, in the earlier ages of the world.

But there is a well known prophecy, or rather a series of prophecies, in the book of Numbers, which will place this matter in an incontestable light. The passages I allude to contain the predictions of Balaam, who was not only sprung from a pagan nation, and therefore *a stranger to the covenant of promise*^p; but who was also a man of a very wicked heart; who preferred *the wages of unrighteousness*^q to the dictates of his conscience, and the expectation of temporal honours to the suggestions of his understanding, though aided and strengthened by various impulses and illuminations from God. This prophet came from Aram or Mesopotamia, near the borders of the Euphrates, out of the mountainous countries of the East, at the instigation of the king of Moab and the elders of Midian^r, with

^p Ephes. ii. 12.

^q 2 Pet. ii. 15.

^r See Numb. xxii. 5. and xxiii. 7.

very

very wicked intentions against the people of the Lord. He was yet a worshipper of the true God, and acknowledged himself so far under his authority, as to be *unable to go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do any thing as of his own mind*^{*}. He was indeed a superstitious worshipper, and a wretch of the most inconsistent conduct: though unable to disobey the divine command, desirous to do it; devout himself, yet studious to make God's people rebellious; mercenary, so as to labour to prostitute to the purposes of gain the greatest favours of Heaven; and, under the full prospect and desire of a future state of happiness, a hypocrite. Yet the Almighty was pleased to make use of such an instrument as this soothsayer, to convey even to the heathen nations, the discoveries of his love, and the manifestations of his favour through a powerful Redeemer.

The part of his predictions, which I would notice, as more immediately relating to our present purpose, commences at the 15th verse

* Ch. xxiv. 13.

of the xxivth chapter; where Balaam, after he had been ordered to flee from Balak, is desirous to advertise the king of Moab what the descendants of Israel *should do to his people in the latter days*¹, in some distant ages of the world, or as the expression is observed most commonly to denote, in the times of the Messiah. *And he took up his parable*, his authoritative or commanding speech, and said,

“ *Balaam the son of Beor speaketh, yea the man, who clearly discerneth, speaketh, he speaketh having heard the words of God, and been instructed in the knowledge of the most High, who saw the vision of the Almighty,*” and though sinking under it, yet with his eyes open, or a clear conviction of the truth: “ *I will manifest him, but not now; I will make him a blessing, but not nigh; a star goeth forth from Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel, which shall smite the princes of Moab, and have dominion over all the children of Seth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession*

¹ Ver. 14.

“ of

*“ of his enemies, and Israel shall do valiantly.
“ Yet though “ be shall descend fram Jacob,
“ be shall destroy the survivors of the city.”*

Several parts of this distinguished prophecy have a reference probably to David in the first place. But the whole is referred by the Chaldee paraphraſt, by all the Targums, and many of the Jews unto Christ, the son of David, the king of Israel, in whom alone as the whole is capable of a fair illustration, so the most considerable particulars were strictly verified. He it was, that should be manifested in God’s due time, and become a blessing to mankind ; who is called by St. Peter *the day-star*^x, and who expressly styles himself in the book of the Revelations, *the root and the offspring of David, the bright and the morning-star*^y; whose celestial origin also, as

^x The vau at the beginning of each of the clauses in this verse, may be rendered in this manner. The versions differ in their ſense of the verb יְרַדֵּת ; but the moſt ancient derive it from יָרַד to descend. So LXX. Targ. Onk. Samar. and Syr. But Vul. Arab. and the more modern ones tranſlate as from רָדַה to have dominion over.

^x 2 Pet. i. 19.

^y Rev. xxii. 16.

well as his coming in the flesh was made known by the appearance of a star^a: He it was who should rise triumphantly over all his enemies, and should have dominion over all the sons of men, or the children of Seth^a: For the distinction between Jew and Gentile should cease under his government, which should comprehend the kingdom of the saints of the most High, of which the prophet Daniel speaks; when the true Israelites should finally enjoy *the empire under the whole heaven, and all the potentates should be subject and obedient unto it*^b: And lastly it was He, who as the descendant of Jacob should by his Roman agent at length destroy those inhabitants of Jerusalem, who had survived the former evacuations of that city^c, and were over-

^a See Matt. ii. 2, 9.

^a Seth was the ancestor of Noah, and consequently the parent of all the inhabitants of the new world; and this I take to be the proper sense of the expression.

^b Ch. vii. 27.

^c Bp. Patrick thus observes on ver. 19: "It is likely, he, " that is Balaam, particularly aims at some great city, and " best fortified, the metropolis, and the strongest hold in the " kingdom." This city I take to be Jerusalem, and see no reason that militates against this application. On the contrary, the dispersion of the Jews seems plainly pointed at in another part

whelmed with a complete destruction in its final catastrophe.

Of a very singular nature is the whole of this prophecy delivered by Balaam. It is perhaps in its compass more wide and comprehensive, if not more extensive in its prospect, than any that had been hitherto delivered to the world; it is therefore deservedly recorded by Moses, and finds a valuable place amongst his writings. That it should be de-

part of the prophecy, ch. xxiii. 9. "Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." And in neither instance was Balaam singular; for both the destruction of the city, and the dispersion of the people, on their impenitence and unbelief, were likewise foretold about the same period by Moses. See Deut. xxviii.

In what manner the Edomites, or descendants of Esau, intimated in this prediction by Edom and mount Seir, triumphed in the destruction of this city, may be learnt from Psal. cxxxvii. 7. *Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem, who said, rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.* See also the like history more largely explained in the prophecy of Obadiah, ver. 10—17. The prophecy before us appears to look through the several prior devastations of the holy city to that final one, when it should be entirely destroyed by the subordinate agent of the Messiah. The prophecy of Obadiah is extended farther, to that period, when those that escape, or the dispersed of the Jews, shall return to mount Zion, to judge the mount of Esau, and the kingdom shall be the Lord's.

livered

livered by this strange diviner at so early a period, and so many centuries before the Messiah appeared, is an argument of the goodness of God, which is infinite, and his mercies extended to all his works : who, though he limited the promise to the seed of Jacob and the family of Judah, yet would not that the rest of mankind should be unacquainted with the gracious purposes of his general design to redeem and save them, and to recover all that were lost.

Nor is it less observable that He had this gracious design in view, when he suffered his chosen people the posterity of Jacob to be carried into Egypt, and to sojourn there some hundreds of years. Egypt was at that time the flourishing mart of a widely-extended commerce⁴.

⁴ See Gen. xxxvii. 25, 28. and ch. xli. 42, 56, 57. The stores of Assyria and even of India were probably conveyed to Egypt by the Arabians, or merchants of Midian, or possibly by some of the Indians themselves. Greece was peopled in a great measure by migrations from Egypt; as Mr. Bryant has illustrated in his Observ. on the Plagues. The same author also thus remarks, at p. 130: "The ruin of their barley was fatal, in respect of their trade; for Egypt seems very early to have been the granary of the world."

Hither

Hither probably the stores and riches of India were conveyed, if not through the Red Sea, at least by the channel of Niniveh, and the territories of Assyria, or of the ancient Elamites. In this country what less could be expected than that those who inherited the promises should make known the will of God's favour to men, should publish *his saving health among all the nations*?^c

Many very remarkable events took place, whilst the Israelites were detained in this seat of bondage. In this time Joseph lived, and discovered in sundry traits of his own character a lively type and figure of the future deliverer. In this time Moses was born, and miraculously preserved from death by a heathen princess, and trained up under her fostering care, so as to be properly qualified to become the deliverer of his people. In this country also many mighty works were performed, which displayed the sovereign hand of God, distinguishing in sparing and relieving his servants, and punishing his enemies. Here that

^c Psal. lxvii. 2.

signal

signal miracle was exhibited, which gave occasion for the institution of the passover ; and in Egypt was slain the first paschal lamb, on the evening that preceded the departure of the Israelites from the land of their slavery^f. This sacrifice, it is true, was expressly appointed with a reference to their escape ; yet the Jews themselves considered it with a prospect to a future enlargement, a more glorious deliverance by the Messiah ; and the redemption itself, with most of its appendant circumstances, received a full and genuine illustration in the sacrifice of our passover Christ.

What new scenes of protection and wonder were continually displayed soon after the departure of the Israelites from Egypt ? when God divided the sea, that his people might pass through, and brought back the accumulated waters on the heads of their enemies^g ; when he conducted them in the wilderness, and carried them to mount Sinai, to be witnesses at the grand solemnity of the manifestation of his law, at the distance of just fifty

^f See Exod. xii.

^g Psal. lxxviii. 13, 53.

days

days from the institution of the passover; when the whole mountain was in a smoke, and felt a violent concussion in the midst of thunders and lightnings and voices^b; when the divine Majesty condescended in this awful manner to accommodate himself to the senses of his people, and to be present at a conference with them, in order to bring them to the knowledge of his truth and the obedience of his will.

In this great desert which the Jews had now entered they were suffered to wander forty years¹; where they had encounters of various sorts with the neighbouring nations, where they had also frequent manifestations of the divine presence and power, and at some times of so tremendous a nature, that Moses was obliged to interpose as a mediator between God and them. And before their escape from this terrible wilderness, one severe calamity befell the people, from which they were relieved by

^b Exod. xix.

¹ See Numb. xiv. 33. Psal. xcv. 10. Deut. viii. 4.

a remedy,

a remedy, which could not but remind them of their so often promised remedy against sin. *The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people*, which wounded them with a mortal bite. And when the people confessed their sin; and prayed that the serpent might be removed; the Lord directed Moses to erect a fiery serpent upon a lofty pole^k, that all the people of the camp might see it; and that every one that looked to it should live.

The serpent was an emblem of the first deceiver of mankind: and *the lifting up of this serpent*^l, according to our Saviour's infallible interpretation, was a type of the manner in which the Redeemer of the world would be *lifted up, to destroy the works of the devil*^m; and *to draw all men unto him*ⁿ. And as the author of the book of Wisdom observes, “ He that turned himself towards it, was not healed by the thing which he saw, but by thee, that art the Saviour of all^o. ” This

^k Numb. xxi. 6, 8.

^l John. iii. 14.

^m i John. iii. 8.

ⁿ John xii. 32.

^o Ch. xvi. 7.

fact

fact seems to have been so well known and understood by the neighbouring nations, that the worship of the serpent became prevalent and general ; and in India, as an ingenious traveller relates, they set up an idol, in the form of a wreathed serpent, upon a pole six or seven feet in height, which was solemnly worshipped, and carried with the people in their travels, as an object of their constant and daily adoration^{*}.

Upon the whole, from a review of that providential scheme which has been hitherto touched upon, it appears, that in the earlier ages of the world a remedy was discovered for Sin, and this discovery made known in a competent measure to mankind. After the dispersions of the sons of men it is probable, that, from the ignorance, inattention, or savage barbarity of some of the distant emigrants, the chief of these traditions might have been obscured, forgotten, or lost. And this must

* See Tavernier's Travels in India, and Patrick on Numbers xxi. 9.

make

make it seem expedient, that the memory of them should be revived by subsequent repeated revelations, serving to attest and confirm the former, and communicated to some persons, either as a reward for their virtue, or rather as being best adapted, from their connections, habits, situation, or other circumstances, to convey and perpetuate the merciful intentions of Providence to the rest of the world.

To us on whom the light hath shone in its full lustre, and compared with whom the former ages lay in darkness, if our gratitude should in any proportion be commensurate with our benefits, our light would *so shine before men*, that they might from hence be induced to *glorify our Father who is in heaven*⁴. But to those who lived in the comparatively darkened times, if they duly improved the knowledge and talents, which they were, or might have been, possessed of, sufficient intimations of a happy deliverance were probably given to

⁴ Matt. v. 16.

all,

S E R M O N II. 65

all, either by the traditions of God's word, the manifestation of his wonders, or at least by that shelter, which every good man might take, in the due contemplation of those mercies displayed in the common blessings of his Providence, in the ordinary works of his hand.

F

S E R-

S E R M O N III.

P A R T I.

ACTS iii. 24.

Yea, and all the propbets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

TH E state of the people of God before the coming of Christ will naturally fall under a threefold division; the former of which may terminate with the giving of the law of Moses and the establishment of the Jewish commonwealth; the second with the Babylonian captivity and the extinction of the kings; and the third may be carried on till the settlement of the Messiah's kingdom, when the Jewish polity ceased, at the utter eversion of the city and temple of Jerusalem.

F 2

We

We have already seen, that the prophets before Samuel, or of the first period, have spoken of the days of the Meffiah ; and have contemplated those earlier intimations of the deliverance from sin, which should be effected by that illustrious prophet, who was to descend from the seed of Abraham in the line of Judah.

About the time that the law of Moses was communicated to the Israelites, or between that time and their fixed settlement in Canaan, the interpositions of the Almighty were so frequent, his wonders so mightily displayed, and the continuance of his extraordinary favours so permanent, that during the presidency of Joshua and of the Judges, God himself might be considered as in a more especial manner the governour of the people ; and no new arguments of distant redemption or comfort could seem wanting to those, who lived under such an immediate theocracy. However therefore the Meffiah might be shadowed forth in the images of persons, whose lives and characters corresponded in many instances with

with his ; and however the general scheme of God's dispensations might have been carried on, as it all along appears to have been through the times of the Old Testament, with a view to the great design of his appearance, yet we are not to wonder, if during this term the express predictions concerning him are less frequent, than in those that preceded or followed it.

But in the days of Samuel, when the word of the Lord had begun to be precious and rare^a, this rebellious progeny of Abraham, discontented with their present government, and eager perhaps for a premature enjoyment of their promised blessing, desired a king. So *God gave them a king in his anger, and took him away in his wrath*^b. Yet in his stead he raised up another, his chosen servant David, who should fulfil all his will ; whom he took from the humble occupation of a shepherd, that he might *feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance*^c.

^a 1 Sam. iii. 1.

^b Hof. xiii. 11. See Acts xiii. 22.

^c Psal. lxxviii. 71.

And now the designs of Providence concerning the future redemption of mankind appear to have been farther unravelled. That the Mesiah should hold a scepter, and reign as a mighty sovereign, had been readily conceived and admitted by those, who had seen their victorious leaders surmounting all opposition, and entering triumphantly into a land overflowing with the richest plenty. But they had received as yet only imperfect hints, that He should live in a humble and abject state, be obliged to undergo many hardships, and suffer many indignities, before he could arrive at his glory. In order to reconcile them to these things, here is a powerful monarch exhibited before them, passing through the lowest abyss of trouble and misery, before he could reach the summit of his dignity; and even when victorious, and seated on his kingdom, still exposed to insults, reviled, and cursed by those, who enjoyed his protection, and were favoured with his love.

What can be a more convincing argument than example? What more likely to prepare
the

the mind for the reception of unwelcome truths, than to see the force of them actually displayed in the life of a person, trained to rule by subjection, and raised to the highest honours by submitting to the most painful and degrading distresses? The minds of the people were to be conciliated to this contrast, and therefore, to convince his subjects, how great a favourite of Heaven this prince was, *The Lord hath swworn to him in truth, Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne*⁴.

Accordingly we find the name of David ascribed by several prophets in the Old Testament to Him, who in the New is called the *Son of David*⁵. And the parent or ancestor was so lively a type and emblem of this Son, that the sacred oracles, when they speak of the former, are frequently to be understood, as predicting truths applicable to the latter. Many passages in the book of Psalms are thus applied by the writers of the New Testa-

⁴ Psal. cxxxii. 11. See also Isa. xi. 1. Jer. xxiii. 5. Psal. lxxxix. 3, 4.

⁵ Matt. ix. 27. xv. 22. Mar. xii. 35.

ment: And our Saviour himself, when expiring on the cross, adopted those emphatical words of David at the beginning of the xxiiid Psalm, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

Indeed, the whole of this and of some other Psalms, where David is speaking of his sufferings, and where also he is speaking of the glories that would attend himself or his Son, must be presumed to look beyond the first application, beyond the then king of Israel, or his son Solomon, to Him whose kingdom should not be confined to Israel, but extended *from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth*^f. So that although those that saw him in his afflicted state should *laugh him to scorn*^g, should *give him gall for meat, and vinegar to drink*^h, and insult him with cruel mockings; yet in the reverse of the scene *all kings should fall down before him, all nations should serve him: His name should en-*

^f Psal. lxxii. 8.

^g Psal. xxii. 7.

^h Psal. lxix. 21.

dure

dure for ever ; and all nations should be blessed in him, and should call him blessed¹.

The ancient Jews still conceived and ever entertained great prejudices against a suffering Messiah, which rendered them unable to discern the true meaning of those passages which related to his afflictions. But they could readily discover the mystical sense of the opposite sort that spoke of his glories. They could moreover apply them constantly to his exaltation, and eagerly seek after symbolical expositions ² for this purpose ; as the

¹ Psal. lxxii. 11. 17.

² Dr. Barrow has some very judicious observations in his 2d vol. Ser. XIX. on the Nature of Types and Presignifications of the Messiah ; from which I have extracted the following passage, as more immediately relating to our present purpose :

“ Neither are these things only said according to suppositions assumed in the New Testament, but they agree (as to their general importance) to the sense of the antient Jews, who did conceive such mysterious references often to lie couched under the letter of the Scriptures. They supposed a Midrash, or mystical sense of Scripture, which they very studiously (even to excess commonly) did search after. It was, as Lud. Capellus affirms, a confident and constant opinion of their Doctors, that all things in the law of Moses were typical, and capable of mystical exposition. And Philo’s writings, composed in, or immediately after our Saviour’s

writings of the earlier times abundantly demonstrate ; and as the applications in the New Testament must also make probable ; since the Apostles and Evangelists would scarce have used the several citations in the sense they did, unless they had known such interpretations to be approved by those to whom they addressed themselves.

But though some of the writings of David are applicable to the Messiah, chiefly in a secondary sense, or looking through the type or copy, are confirmed and fully substantiated only in the grand original ; yet there are others that look forward directly to that glorious King, who was in a most peculiar sense the anointed of God ; and which, disdaining as it were the help of a resemblance, trace out the unveiled state and most appropriated characters of the Redeemer. Of this sort I take to be the whole of the cxth Psalm ; which, as it describes two of the most distinguished offices

“ Saviour’s time, are a plain confirmation of what he saith : “ we have also several instances and intimations thereof in the “ New Testament.” See Matt. xxi. 9. 42. and xxii. 32. 42.

of

of the Messiah, as it speaks of him in such varied terms, of the most honourable dignity and profound humiliation, and as it may give us an opportunity of throwing some light on his high original, I shall beg leave to offer in the following exposition and comment.

The former part of this Psalm is ascribed by Christ himself to David in the xiith chapter of St. Mark¹, and therefore we cannot hesitate to pronounce him the author of it; and though some few Chaldaisms are discoverable in it, as we shall presently shew, we must presume they crept in at later times. As little doubt also can be made in the application of it, since our Lord^m hath declared that it was spoken of Christ, and his Apostles St. Peterⁿ and St. Paul^o apply it in the very same manner.

The Psalmist begins with proclaiming the royal majesty and transcendent dignity of the Messiah; for though he was to be the Son of

¹ Ver. 36.

^m Matt. xxii. 43, &c.

ⁿ Acts ii. 34, 35.

^o 1 Cor. xv. 25. Heb. i. 13. and v. 6.

David,

David, yet David himself styles him his **LORD**, saying,

i. JEHOVAH said to my **LORD**, sit on my right hand,

Till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

To fit on the king's right hand denotes the highest place of worldly honour ; and what honour can be comparable with his, who is seated at the right hand of the *King of all kings, and Governour of all things*? In such inconceivable state the Messiah was to be placed, to receive his investiture into his mediatorial kingdom ; and in this supereminent dignity he was to continue, till all things should be subdued unto him, and all enemies should be put under his feet ; till he should resume that sovereignty, of which the Psalmist speaks thus in the xlvth Psalm, *Tby throne, O God, is for ever and ever*[¶].

The actual commencement of this kingdom upon earth should be among the Jews ;

[¶] Prayer in time of war and tumults.

[¶] So Heb. i. 8.

For

For 2. JEHOVAH sendeth the rod of thy power
out of Zion,

Which ruleth in the midst of thine enemies :

Here the staff or ensign was to be set up, from whence should issue all that virtue or sovereign grace, which should crush the whole kingdom of the powers of darkness ; from whence he should smite the earth with the rod, or blast, of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips should be slay the wicked one¹.

But though his dominion upon earth should begin at Zion, the influence of his covenant and grace would commence in the eternal decree before the world began : for thus I apprehend we should translate the next verse.

3. *With thee do I make a voluntary offering in the day of thy power on the mountains of holiness,*

¹ Isa. xi. 4.

* On the mountains. בחררי. So upwards of forty MSS. and among them the ancient Bodleian : the present text has בחררי in the beauties.

Before

*Before the womb^t, before the breaking of
the morning^u, I begat thee.*

I must beg leave to observe on this difficult passage, that there are two words in this verse usually rendered as nouns, which I take to be verbs of the first person in the preterit tense; the latter ^x is so rendered by the Septuagint; and the former, *I make a free-will offering*^v, I conceive to be of the same form,

^t See a like expression, Jer. i. 5.

^u See Isa. xlivi. 13. There the expression is מִמְבָרֶךְ, ‘before the day was;’ here מִשְׁחָרֶךְ, ‘before the morning.’

^v οὐείμωα σι. ‘I begat thee.’ Very many MSS. and some ancient agree with LXX in this word, and read לִזְהַרְךָ. יְלִזְהַרְךָ.

נְדָבַת ^u. In both these words the MSS. labour very much; and in both a Vau is introduced before the last letter by a multitude of MSS. especially in the present word. The late learned J. D. Michaelis once thought that this word ought to be pointed as a verb in the second person singular, נְדָבֵת, and rendered *convocas*: but on seeing that 179 copies in Kennicott’s collation had Vau before the last letter, he changed his opinion: See his Suppl. part v. Now I suspect the Vau is only the Jod misplaced and lengthened, and that instead of נְדָבַת we should read, נְדָבָתִי, if any alteration is necessary; but if we can allow the Chaldee form, the verb may be considered in the first person as it now stands.

That the Reader may see a few other instances in which the formative Jod is dropped, I will beg leave to offer the following. Psal. lxxxviii. 8. *Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and with all*

though the formative letter *Jod* in both instances is lost. But this is a common idiom in the Chaldee language, and may be observed in several parts of the Chaldee of Daniel^z. And when the form of the letters was changed, and the Chaldee character substituted for the ancient Hebrew, I suspect this change was at the same time introduced.

There is, I conceive, a very small error in the present Hebrew text, which I have ventured to correct from the Greek version in the best manner I am able, and which, together with the reasons of it, may be seen below^a.

all thy waves, or breakers, I am afflicted, תִּנְיַע, which is rendered usually as the second person, and pointed as such by the Masora, ‘Thou hast afflicted me.’ So again, Prov. viii. 13. *I fear JEHOVAH, I hate evil, pride and arrogance — do I hate.* The last verb has the Jod at the end; in the two former it is dropped, and therefore they are mistaken for nouns by our translators, and pointed also as such.

^z See ch. ii. 25, 26. iii. 14, 15. iv. 5, &c.

^a Instead of לְקָרְבָּן, I would read in one word לְבָטָל, ‘for an ‘interruption,’ by a change of the letter Caph for Beth, which, before final letters were introduced, would be considered from their similarity as a very small alteration; and there are multitudes of instances in which these letters are mistaken for each other. One MS. has בָּטָל, which must make the change appear more easy.

The verb בָּטָל is used very seldom in Hebrew, but often in Chaldee:

With this little alteration the expression may be thus rendered, ‘ before the darkness was broken through,’ interrupted, or ceased, that is, agreeably to the reading of the Seventy,

Chaldee: and in Ezra iv. 24. it occurs twice in a sense not unlike what I have here given it. *Then was interrupted the work of the house of God at Jerusalem: and the interruption continued to the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.* The proper sense of the verb is *to cease or rest*; sometimes *continually*, but rather *occasionally*; and hence it signifies *to intermit*, or *be interrupted*. See Cast. Lex. And the word לְבָטֵל, if the prefix ה be retained, may be either a gerund, or a noun. But I suspect the true reading is שַׁחַר בָּטֵל. שַׁחַר in its strict and proper sense denotes blackness, darkness, or duskiness, and hence is applied to the dawning or opening of the day. And the whole expression I would refer, with LXX. to the interruption of the darkness on the rude chaotic matter, when the first dawn of light struck through it.

That the present text is faulty I have no doubt, as it is quite irreconcileable with the ancient versions, and affords no good sense in the modern ones; and perhaps the mysterious nature of the subject contributed not a little to the embarrassment which might occasion the corruption. The emendation here suggested is the best that occurs to my mind; and whether the letter of the text is rightly restored or not, I am of opinion, from its agreement with the LXX. that the general sense is right.

I would just remark farther the difference of the expression, when an ordinary dawning is alluded to, and this original introduction of it. We read עד עליות השחר, *till the ascending of the morning*, Gen. xxxii. 24. and מעלות השחר, *from the ascending of the morning*, Neh. iv. 21. and בעפער שחר *on the eyelids of the morning*, Job iii. 9. But here the allusion is to the interruption of the original darkness, at the first eruption of the dawn.

προ Εωσφορου, before the bringing, or breaking, in of the morning.

With this construction there is I conceive a consistent and well-connected sense; and I confess I know not how to make any such sense from the words, as they now stand, or as they are rendered in any of the versions. The former part of the verse alludes to the voluntary offering, or sacrifice of the Messiah, on the mountains of Jerusalem; on which occasion the day of his power would shine forth in its greatest lustre, when through death *he should destroy him who had the power of death, and deliver those who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage*^b. And the latter clause is expressive of his eternal generation, whereby he was the Son of God before all worlds; that *all powerful wisdom, erected from everlasting, whom the Lord possessed in the beginning of his way, before his works of old*^c; who also in the divine decree was adopted as a Mediator, long before

^b Heb. ii. 15.

^c Prov. viii. 22, 23.

he was conceived in the womb ; who should be made perfect through suffering in God's due time, and, after having made his soul an offering for sin, regain his original dignity.

In consequence of this the Psalmist proceeds in the next verse to the priestly office of the Redeemer, to point out in the most solemn manner, that he was to be a priest in a peculiar sense ; for he would *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*^a.

4. JEHOVAH hath sworn and will not repent,

Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec^c.

He could not be a priest in the Levitical line, or after the order of Aaron, since He as well as his ancestor David were to descend from the loins of Judah. But he was to have an unchangeable priesthood, of an earlier order than that transferred to Aaron;

^a Heb. ix. 26.

^c In Kennicott's Coll. this line is divided thus :

Thou art a priest for ever,
After the order of Melchisedec.

not

not subject indeed to the ordinary vicissitudes of time, but *without beginning of days, or end of life^f*, without predecessor or successor, and annexed to the royal dignity ; such as was suited to him, who was to bring a blessing to all nations, to be the King of righteousness and peace, in a sense far superior to Melchisedec or Solomon ; since he should not only offer a satisfactory atonement, but *live for ever to make intercession for^g mankind.*

The Psalmist would now intimate the triumphs of this victorious Priest and King, in an address directed apparently to Jehovah ; and one ancient MS. supplies this word at the beginning of the 5th verse :

*5. O JEHOVAH, the Lord is on thy right hand,
Who woundeth kings in the day of his (or
thy) wrath.*

No temporal power shall be able to stand before him, but the greatest potentates on earth, who resist him, and provoke his anger,

^f Heb. vii. 3.

^g Heb. vii. 25.

shall be subdued unto him, shall be bruised as with a rod of iron, and broken in pieces like the fragile vessel of the potter^b.

Moreover his power shall not be confined to the present transitory scene of things, but shall be awfully displayed in the final distribution of their proper lots to the righteous and the wicked, when he shall have completed the exercise of his sovereign authority upon the earth:

6. He shall judge the full number of the deadⁱ among the nations,

^b See Ps. ii. 9.

ⁱ Verse 6. מִלְאָכֵת. LXX. πληρόσις πλεματα. The word מִלְאָכֵת is considered as a verb by the Versions, which appears rather from the general construction of the Psalm to be a noun. As such, according to Buxtorf, it is rendered *plenitudo, multitudo*, or, with a view to both senses, may mean *the full multitude*. The other word, rendered by LXX. πλεματα, is mistaken by their translators and the Vulg. for *ruinas*; but in the Syriac and Arabic is translated by *cadavera*: so that the sense of these Versions as well as the LXX. may nearly agree with what I have offered. *He shall judge among the nations, he shall fill up the dead carcases, by infusing their souls or spirits into them at the resurrection.*

Who

Who, bath smitten the chiefs^k over many a country.

After he hath finally subdued all his enemies upon earth, and the prince as well as the potentates of this darksome world, *the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience*¹, then shall the end be; when the dead carcases of all men shall be raised to life, and stand together for judgment before the Son of God.

To qualify himself for these solemn purposes, the close connection is finally pointed at between the priestly and the royal characters, or the humiliation of the Messiah is considered as a prelude to his exaltation, and

^k *Smitten the chiefs.* שָׁנַת צָבָא. ‘He hath smitten the chief.’ The term is singular, and is used in the like form and import by the prophet Habakkuk, ch. iii. 13. I understand it either of the Prince of the powers of darkness, called in the New Testament οὐρανός the wicked one, and Satan, or, of the apostate spirits in general; whose influence prevailed over many countries, and kept them bound in the chains of idolatry, till the kingdom of Christ came, and was established on the ruins of the usurpation of the Devil.

¹ Ephes. ii. 2.

that the latter would be the merited reward, as well as suitable consequence of the former.

*7. Of the brook in the way he shall drink,
Therefore shall be exalt his head.*

Like his predecessor and emblem Elijah, he should drink of the most ordinary rivulet, should be reduced to the lowest depression of temporal distress, that he might follow him also in his triumphant ascension to glory ^m.

In this view of the psalm, the outlines of two principal characters of the Messiah are strongly drawn; and we must be convinced that his sacerdotal office and regal dignity were predicted by David, as his prophetical character was foreshewn by Moses.

I do not mean to intimate, that either of these characters was in no degree discovered to the world, till the times, in which we have

^m The reader may perhaps like to see the translation of the Psalm without the comment, which I shall subjoin at the end of this first part of the Discourse.

marked

marked their presignification. My design was to shew, that they were clearly foretold in the early ages. And to evince that they were to belong to the Meffiah, I have selected these passages, as affording a strong and undeniable evidence. The prediction of Moses is very clear and decisive with regard to the prophetical character, and the two others may be sufficiently collected from the psalm which we have just explained, whatever may be the sense of the more difficult passages¹. I rather insist on these offices, as they are doubtless the distinguishing characteristics of the Mef-siah. And as they are of such great importance, it will be our busines to point out their farther manifestation, together with other tokens of the promised Messiah, in the latter part of this discourse.

¹ Anthony Purver observes on the third verse, “ there “ doubtless may be a more exact, nay ought to be a better and “ truer translation.” He supposes LXX understood לְבָנָה to be בְּלִינָה the morning star.

For an ingenious explanation of the latter line of this verse, as it now stands, see Bp. Lowth de Sacr. Poes. Heb. Præl. x, p. 88.

PSALM

P S A L M C X.

1. JEHOVAH said to my Lord, Sit on my right hand,
Till I make thine enemies thy footstool.
2. JEHOVAH sendeth the rod of thy power out of Zion,
Which ruleth in the midst of thine enemies.
3. With thee do I make a voluntary offering in the day
of thy power, on the mountains of holiness ;
Before the womb, before the breaking of the morn-
ing, I begat thee.
4. JEHOVAH hath sworn, and will not repent,
Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Mel-
chisedec.
5. O JEHOVAH, the Lord is on thy right hand,
Who woundeth kings in the day of his wrath.
6. He shall judge the full number of the dead among
the nations,
Who hath smitten the chiefs over many a country.
7. Of the brook in the way he shall drink,
Therefore shall he exalt his head.

S E R-

S E R M O N III.

P A R T II.

FROM the early predictions of the Old Testament, we have already been able to ascertain three distinguished characters of the Meffiah, that He was to be a Prophet, a Priest, and a King. The two latter offices have been illustrated from a view of the cxth Psalm in the former part of this discourse ; and if the interpretation which we have given of some of the more difficult passages of that psalm be just, these offices will receive such additional light, as must recommend them with very striking notice and very convincing evidence. In what light these peculiar discoveries were understood by the generality of the people, to whom they were immediately

mediately made, or how far they were any of them suffered to penetrate into the depths of these sublime mysteries, there can be no occasion for us to enquire. Probably the true sense and full interpretation of this, and the like passages, was reserved for those later ages, who should have seen and enjoyed the accomplishment of the blessings. Yet even those earlier generations, to whom they were originally revealed, were doubtless sufficiently enlightened, to establish their faith, and encourage their hope, in a merciful Deliverer; to whom *a great cloud of witness^{es}*¹, as we shall presently see, bore such ample testimony, that nothing but extreme wickedness, gross dulness, or the most determined obduracy of heart, could entirely resist.

Soon after the reign of David, Solomon his son built a house or temple unto the Lord; in which were introduced, under a kind of veil, many emblematical exercises and symbolical offerings, designed to shadow forth the office of a **MEDIATOR**; as in the law of Moses many

¹ Heb. xii. 1.

expiatory

expiatory rites and propitiatory sacrifices had been instituted for sin, which were types of the truly efficacious sacrifice, to be offered up in the fulness of time by the REDEEMER. Both these characteristics of God's tender love, together with their adjuncts, dependencies, and consequences, were farther manifested by the predictions of several holy men, whom God raised up as prophets in the subsequent ages, to keep up among his people the constant memory of his loving kindness, and through them to communicate to the nations his gracious dispensation of mercy to mankind. *By these prophets he spake at sundry times and in divers manners*^b, yet so as in the end to leave no traces unmarked, that might be expedient to discover the true Deliverer, who should appear among men, to those that with unprejudiced minds and integrity of heart should seek after the knowledge of Him.

It is our present design to attend farther to some brighter illustrations of those general and more distinguished offices, which have

^b Heb. i. 1.

been

been already notified, as well as to the lesser manifestations of his person, chiefly under the reign of the kings; or to view the prophets exulting in their vivid display of the future tokens of the Redeemer of Israel.

It was necessary that the promised Seed of the woman should be free from human defilement; for He must be *holy, undefiled, and separate from sinners*^c, who should be qualified to make an atonement for the sins of the world. Accordingly it was foretold by the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah, that the Messiah should be born in a supernatural manner. *The Lord, saith the latter, createth a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man*^d:

^c Heb. vii. 26.

^d Ch. xxxi. 22. I am aware that some commentators have understood this passage in a very different sense: but as the generality of Christian interpreters have referred it, with the vulgar Latin, to the miraculous conception of the blessed Virgin, I have therefore mentioned it. And I confess, there is such strength and force in some of the terms, that I cannot but think something more is meant than a mere proverbial speech, that *the weaker shall discomfit the stronger*. A new creation in the earth seems language of strong import, as if some very extraordinary event would follow; at least more uncommon than what might be intimated by an ordinary proverb. The word נָשָׁה, a *strong man*,

And this new creation may be thus illustrated in clearest language by the former ; *Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel*^e. So very expressive is the name of this child, and so peculiar the language of the prophecy, that it must evidently relate to some great Deliverer, expected to spring from the family of David ; which could not be Hezekiah, as he was born several years before the prophecy was delivered^f ;

man, may mean also a person of distinguished excellence, and thus is applied to Christ, Zech. xiii. 7. Psal. xlv. 4. And the term נָזְרָה, a woman, is observed to be nowhere used in a plural sense in scripture, but always to denote an individual ; and, as a miracle is here evidently intended, may fairly be applied to the Virgin Mary. Nor has the verb נִצְדַּקֵּנָה an improper reference to the comprehension here meant, if the expression relate to the coception of Christ. See Pool's Syn. However, if some persons of deserved reputation may be disposed to give up this passage, as thinking it neither, in a primary or secondary sense, to intend the immaculate conception ; the other from Isaiah must clearly demonstrate it. I have placed them both together, as in my opinion they may serve to illustrate or strengthen each other.

^e Isa. vii. 14. See Bp. Lowth on the place, and Mic. v. 3.

^f The prophecy was delivered in the reign of Ahaz, who reigned sixteen years, (2 Kings xvi. 2.) and was succeeded by his son Hezekiah, who was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, (2 Kings xviii. 2.) and therefore was born many years before these words were spoken.

and

and could relate only to him, who is considered afterwards as the Lord and Prince of the land of Judah, or, according to the application of St. Matthew, to CHRIST : Concerning whom the same prophet speaks soon after in terms of the most ample magnificence ; *Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder : And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Father of the everlasting age, the Prince of peace*^g.

But the salvation wrought by this wonderful Prince was to be, or arise, among the Jews ; and it was foretold by the prophet Micah, that this Child should be born in Bethlehem ; a circumstance so well understood by the Jews, that when Herod had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, and demanded of them where Christ should be born^h, they all agreed that it would be in Bethlehem in the land of Judah, and quoted the prophecy of Micahⁱ in confirmation of it. Nor

^g Ch. ix. 6.

^h Matt. ii. 4.

ⁱ Ch. v. 2. Matt. ii. 6.

can

can I forbear to hint in how remarkable a manner, and by what unexpected and improbable means, this circumstance was accomplished; which must be notorious to every one, who has reflected on the history recorded in the former part of the second chapter of St. Luke.

Yet still the nations were to behold *the brightness of his rising*¹; and thus it was predicted by the prophet Hosea, and verified in as striking a manner, *Out of Egypt have I called my Son*^m.

Moreover, the manner of life of the Messiah, as well as the circumstances of his birth, were minutely described by the prophets. *He should grow up like a tender sucker, and like a root from a thirsty soil: He hath no form, nor any beauty that we should regard him; nor is his countenance such that we should desire him; despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; so that we thought him judicially stricken, smitten of*

¹ Isa. lx. 3.

^m Ch. xi. 1.

God,

God, and afflicted^a. He would be treated as a worm, and not as man, be the reproach of men, and despised of the people^b ; inasmuch that he should become a stranger to his brethren, and an alien to his mother's children^c. And yet, so commanding was his influence, that his force shall not be abated, nor broken, until he hath firmly seated judgment in the earth, and the distant nations shall earnestly wait for his law^d.

Isaiah likewise speaks in the most beautiful imagery of the fruitfulness and prosperity, which should arise from this rod out of the stem of Jesse, this branch of David ; when the spirit of JEHOVAH shall rest upon him, *and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the depths of the sea^e.*

In another place he thus describes his prophetic character ; “ JEHOVAH hath anointed

^a Isa. liii. 2, 3.

^b Psal. xxii. 6.

^c Psal. lxix. 8.

^d See Bp. Lowth on Isa. xlvi. 4.

^e Ch. xi. in Lowth's Translation.

“ me,

“ me, to publish glad tidings to the meek hath
 “ he sent me; to bind up the broken-hearted;
 “ to proclaim to the captives freedom, and
 “ to the bounden perfect liberty, to proclaim
 “ the year of acceptance with JEHOVAH*. At
 “ which time shall be unclosed the eyes of
 “ the blind, and the ears of the deaf shall be
 “ opened, when the lame shall bound like the
 “ hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing†.”

In like manner the prophet Jeremiah describes him, as introducing new overtures of grace to mankind: *Behold, the days come, saith JEHOVAH, that I will make with the house of Israel a new covenant; and I will put my law into their inward parts, and upon their hearts will I write it; and I will pardon their iniquity, and remember their sin no more*‡. The prophet Ezekiel seems to have added the rite of initiation into this new covenant; *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be cleansed from all your defilements*§; I

* Ch. lxi. 1, 2.

† Ch. xxxv. 5, 6.

‡ Jer. xxxi. 31. Dr. Blayney's Transl.

§ So Isa. lii. 15. *He shall sprinkle many nations.* The legal purifications are probably alluded to in the first place; as when the Levites were separated and cleansed by the water of purification,

*will also give you a new heart, and a new spirit.
will I put within you, and cause you to walk*

fication, Num. viii. 6, 7. or, when the water of separation was sprinkled upon the unclean person to cleanse him, Num. xix. 18, 19. But by comparing the passage with those in the New Testament, where mention is made of baptism, in order to wash away our sins, and as a sacramental institution previously requisite to the remission of them, there can be little doubt, but this sacred rite was also here intimated. And probably the Apostle alludes to this passage, Heb. x. 22, 23. where he exhorts believers to *have their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and their bodies washed with pure water*: or, as the words may more strictly be rendered, ‘sprinkled as to their ‘hearts from an evil conscience, and washed as to the body ‘with pure water.’ The expressions in both clauses I conceive to be nearly equivalent: for there is certainly as much reason that the heart should be thoroughly cleansed, as there is for the cleansing of the body. The prophet’s expression seems to comprehend both, ‘Ye shall be cleansed from all your defilements.’ And I imagine the Apostle means to allude to the twofold method of baptizing in the church of God, either by putting the body into water, or by sprinkling or pouring water upon it.

The most general sense of the word *Banriq̄w* is *to wash*. See Mar. vii. 4. Luke xi. 38. Heb. ix. 10. and it may be applied either to the washing the whole body, or a part of it; either to a total immersion, or a more sparing use of water. Nor am I aware, that it can be proved from any directly decisive words of scripture, that either mode of Baptism should be adopted in preference to the other. Though I am ready to allow, that as the baptism of adults or new converts to Christianity, was doubtless the more frequent in the Apostles’ times, the method by immersion was probably most usual. Yet it should seem that we need not to be very solicitous, and especially in

in my statutes, and to keep my judgments, and do them'.

The language in which the prophets describe a suffering Messiah is so very full and particular, that as the design of it is nothing less than to manifest God's aversion to sin, and his wonderful dispensation of mercy to sinners, so neither can the exactness and strength of the features suffer the portraiture to be mistaken. *We all of us like sheep have strayed, we have turned aside every one to his own way; and JEHOVAH hath made to light upon him the iniquity of us all. It was exacted, and he was made answerable: as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a*

in these cold northern countries, about the quantity of water, when we consider that *the baptism which sagett us, is not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer, or stipulation, of a good conscience towards God.* 1 Pet. iii. 21.

Those who would wish to see this controversy treated at large may consult Mr. Wall's History of Infant Baptism; and such as desire to peruse a shorter, but satisfactory, view of the subject, may find such a one in Archbishop Secker's XXXVth Lect. on the Church Catechism. What I have here offered will, I trust, be sufficient to justify the application of the prophecy to the baptismal rite.

^y Ez. xxxvi. 25. See Bp. Newcome's Translation.

sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. By an oppressive judgement he was taken off: and yet if his soul shall make a propitiatory sacrifice, He shall see a seed which shall prolong their days^a.

And as the history of his life, so likewise the circumstances of his death are minutely foretold: *They pierced my hands and my feet^b,* saith the Psalmist; which the prophet Zechariah in later times thus confirms: *They shall look upon me whom they transfixed or pierced^c;* for whose price, as he elsewhere observes, *they weighed thirty pieces of silver^d.* And Isaiah saith, *He was numbered with the transgressors, and made intercession for the transgressors.* And yet after all, though his grave was appointed with the wicked, yet with the rich man was his tomb^e. His continuance in the grave was shadowed forth, or rather exemplified, in that remarkable history of the prophet Jonah; who was three days and nights

^a Isa. liii. 6, 7, 10. Bp. Lowth.

^a Psal. xxii. 16.

^b Zech. xii. 10.

^c Ch. xi. 12.

^d Ch. liii. 12. 9.

in the whale's belly, to represent the time that the Son of Man should continue in the heart of the earth^e. A circumstance that was intimated likewise by the prophet Hosea in the following language: *After two days will be revive us, and in the third day he will raise us up*^f: which words, though spoken of the deliverance of the Israelites, must probably have been meant as a type of him, who was to rise the third day from the dead. The reception of him after his resurrection into the everlasting mansions of peace and glory is also foreshewn in that animated apostrophe of the Psalmist at the close of the xxivth Psalm, *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of Glory.*

The consequences that will ensue after these last illustrious events are described by the prophets in the most triumphant language. Then it shall follow, that *the root of Jesse*

^e Matt. xii. 40.

^f Hof. vi. 2.

will stand for an ensign to the people^e; to whose banner they shall repair, and his resting-place shall be glorious. That the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and all nations shall flow unto it^h; that the Messiah should sit on his throne, to reign continually over the house of Jacob; that of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for everⁱ. When from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts^k.

These several predictions, and many more that might be adduced, have an evident relation to the Messiah, to the design of his appearance, and of his kingdom. The completion of

^e Isa. xi. 10.^h Isa. ii. 2.ⁱ Isa. ix. 7.^k Mal. i. 11.

some

some of them has been pointed at, as they have been offered ; of others, in the notices we have already taken, and will be still farther in those we may hereafter take, of the character and offices of CHRIST. And if the limits of our work would permit us to attend to the history of the completion of the whole, and to obviate the cavils of the infidel, they would furnish a most irrefragable argument of the certainty of our holy religion, from the discovery of distant contingent events, in a most wonderful variety of modes and circumstances, yet all, however diversified, concurring to demonstrate the divine interposition, in the establishment of the truth as it is in Jesus.

What has been already suggested will satisfy the candid, the believing mind, and may help to confirm it in the faith¹. And if the un-

¹ I think it proper to intimate here, that the argument from prophecy, as well as other religious arguments, should be considered with a twofold intention, either to confirm the believer, or to refute the infidel. There are many passages, often understood as prophecies, which are of doubtful interpretation : though these would be of little use, considered in themselves, and without a reference to more clear and express predictions, yet they may receive such light from these, and in return add

believer would take a fair and full view of the whole magnificent scheme in itself, and in its parts, especially in its long continued series of growing evidence, all uniting in one point, and terminating in the same grand object, it might overrule his minute objections, strike

such strength to them, as may give additional conviction and increasing satisfaction to believers, and consequently may serve to confirm their minds in the true faith. One would not therefore too readily give up a passage, which has been commonly received as a prediction, and which may have many good and just reasons to support it as such. Whatever indeed cannot be supported by fair argument, or is at all inconsistent with the truth, must undoubtedly be rejected ; but some things may be true and certain, which we may not be able rightly to account for, or under the present appearances with ease to explain.

However, in our commerce with unbelievers a different method must be pursued, and we must always choose the most tenable ground, and indeed should fix on no other, but what has been proved, or is manifestly safe and secure, that we may not in any respect expose our holy religion to the insults of the scoffer, the ridicule of the libertine, or the contempt of the infidel.

It can be scarce necessary to add, that discourses from the pulpit must surely have a more especial regard to the former class of men than to the latter, to the friends rather than the enemies of Christianity. Where we have opportunity, we should endeavour to do good to all men ; but our chief attention must be to those who are of the household of faith.

For a copious and able illustration of the antient types and predictions, in the person and offices of Jesus, see Dr. Barrow's Works, Vol. II. Serm. XVII. &c.

his

his philosophy silent, and convince him on the principles of just reasoning, or of his so much boasted philosophy itself.

From the compendious glance we have hitherto taken of this great and important subject, we cannot but discern and admire the wonderful love as well as wisdom of God, in thus gradually unfolding his gracious designs of mercy to his people; we cannot but have reason to exclaim with the prophet, *How beautiful are the feet of the joyful messenger of good tidings, of him that announceth salvation, of him that saith unto Sion, thy God reigneth^m.*

To the chosen people in the first place this dispensation of mercy was announced; to the children of the stock of Abraham, in its earlier notices, as well as in its fuller promulgation, the word of this salvation was sent. But though the primary language of prophecy was, JEHOVAH *bath comforted his people, be bath redeemed Israelⁿ*; though it was judged

^m Isa. lii. 7.

ⁿ Isa. lii. 9.

expedient,

expedient, that this people should be thus supported and cherished, in order to preserve the knowledge and worship of JEHOVAH, or a purity of religion and morals, amidst the general contagion of impiety and idolatry ; yet still through the mysterious depths of the divine counsels, the discoveries made to the Jews were extended widely over the face of the earth, and the distant nations were probably favoured with renewed attestations of the intended salvation of God.

For when the reign of the kings was established, and the temple completed at Jerusalem, ten of the tribes, by an unnatural schism, soon revolted from the true worship of God, and settled themselves under another ruler in Samaria. Not many years after which separation, Samaria was reduced and taken by the Assyrians, and the Israelites were made captives and dispersed among the nations. By these means the knowledge of God's gracious purposes of favour to mankind was diffused also with the dispersions of his people ; and the traditions which had been brought down to

to the nations from earlier times, might have been corrected and strengthened by fresh communications, received from these later descendants of Jacob.

Moreover, as amongst the remnant of Judah iniquities were predominant, and the idolatries of the Jews still called for vengeance from Heaven; after Jerusalem, the holy city, had suffered various distresses from Egypt, the king of Babylon at length came up against it, and subdued it; the people were led away into captivity at different times, and in such vast multitudes, that there were not enough left for the ordinary purposes of life, or to cultivate the land. Even several of their prophets were conveyed to Chaldea, during the period of this general dispersion; and they delivered their predictions there; and some of them were published in the language of that country. From hence the knowledge of God's merciful intentions was widely spread abroad amongst the various subjects of the Assyrian empire, and communicated probably wherever the fame of Babylon might extend, which

which was at that time as the most stately, so one of the most commercial cities in the world.

Thus whilst the chosen people were especially remembered, the whole race of mankind were not forgotten; the Jewish commonwealth, and even its overthrow, had contributed to disseminate the knowledge of a SAVIOUR; and his merits were doubtless so far beneficial to the salvation of those, who had only obscure notices of him, that through him in every nation, he that feared God, and wrought righteousness, was accepted of Him^o.

^o Acts x. 35.

S E R-

S E R M O N IV.

M A L A C H I iii. i.

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his Temple; even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

IT had been foretold by the prophet Isaiah, long before the commencement of the Babylonian captivity, that a prince, called expressly by the name of Cyrus*, how little so-

* If it be urged against this nominal precision, that the name of Cyrus is a sort of appellative, which was borrowed, according to Plutarch, from the Sun : Κύρος γαρ καλεῖται τὸς Πίεσταις τὸν Σίλιον. In Artax. p. 1012. It may be replied, that most of the antient names of princes or sovereigns are honourable distinctions, derived from some eminent quality of light, heat, power,

ever acquainted with the attributes and worship of the true God, should yet perform all his pleasure ; of which a considerable part was manifested, in *saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built, and to the Temple, thy foundation shall be laid*^b.

This prince, who, about the expiration of the seventy years of captivity, had obtained the full sovereignty over that state into which the Jews were exiled, by the divine instigation

power, or the like : but that this name was so peculiarly appropriated to this prince, that he does not appear to have been known by any other.

^b Isa. xliv. 28. It is observable that the prophecies of the Old Testament are of two sorts, either such as looked to the Messiah, to a great redemption at a very considerable distance, which they foreshewed in a variety of views ; or else such as had an earlier reference, and were fulfilled by events, more near, or more remote, according to the purposes of Providence. The design of which latter appears to have been, either to establish the authority of God's messenger, and the discoveries of his truth, or to encourage the hopes of those persons to whom they were delivered, and to raise their expectations to the future redemption, to which some of these predictions often looked forward. If we contemplate prophecy in this twofold aspect, what a magnificent idea will it give us of the general design of the Almighty's tender regard for his rational creatures in all ages of the world, and of his wonderful mercies continually discovered in the grand scheme of man's redemption !

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published a proclamation ^c throughout his dominions, exhorting the people of Israel to leave his kingdom, and go up to Jerusalem, in order to build there a house or temple for the Lord. For which purpose he not only recommended to his subjects to supply them with immense treasures of various sorts ; but he himself also restored to them a great abundance of very costly vessels, which Nebuchadnezzar had sacrilegiously carried away with the plunder of that afflicted city ^d.

But the Jews having been depressed by a long slavery, and after they were released from their bondage, disheartened through much opposition from neighbouring invaders, were sadly remiss in the execution of this great design ^e; although furnished for it with such munificent supplies by the Emperor of the earth, and directed in it by the oracles of God. Whereupon the prophets Haggai and Zechariah ^f were sent to them with new commissions from Heaven, to urge them to the completion of this pious work; *and the Lord stirred up*

^c Ezra i. 1, 3.

^d Ver. 7—11.

^e Ch. iv. 4, 5. Hag. i. 6, 9.

^f Ez. v. 1.

the

the spirit of Zerubbabel the governour of Ju-dab, and the spirit of Joshua the high-priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people, and they came and did work in the house of the Lord of hosts their God^s.

Yet notwithstanding the costly gifts and large treasures, with which the people were supplied for the rearing and furnishing this sumptuous edifice, those antient men, who had seen the first Temple, and remembered the former glory of this house, when they saw the foundations of this new one, wept over them; for in their eyes the latter in comparison of the other appeared as nothing^b. Lest they should be discouraged from this disparaging view of things, the prophet Haggai exhorts them still to perseverance; and alledges an argument for it the most convincing, the most forcible, and the most exhilarating, that could influence or captivate the heart of man. It was nothing less than the actual presence of the Saviour of the world, of whom all their prophets had spoken; the coming of the

^s Hag. i. 14.^b Hag. ii. 3. Ez. iii. 12.

MESSIAH, the Lord of Glory, to this latter House; that glorious Deliverer in whom they trusted; in whose day *there should be a fountain opened*, not only *to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem*, but to all the families of the earth, *for sin and for uncleanness*¹; *behold He shall come to his Temple, saith the Lord of Hosts.*

In our review of the prophecies relating to the personal appearance of the Messiah, there is one very material circumstance, to which we have not hitherto duly attended; and which, though hinted in more general terms, even before the establishment of the Jewish commonwealth^k, was reserved for a more full manifestation to later ages; I mean, the time of his coming. And this was to be, whilst the renewed Temple stood, and a little before its dissolution. It was pointed out likewise with such minute exactness in other respects, that this one argument, surveyed in itself, and with its concomitant appendages, must serve

¹ Zech. xiii. 1. ^k Gen. xlix. 10.

as an incontestible clue to impartial minds, to lead them to the discovery of the true Redemer, that should come to Sion, and should turn away ungodliness from Jacob¹.

To prove this, I shall endeavour to illustrate a few predictions of a more recent date, or that were delivered after the termination of the reign of the kings of Judah, in the earlier part of that term, which may be called the third period of prophecy. And the first of these shall be the prophecy of Haggai just alluded to, in his second chapter, from the sixth verse to the ninth; which I shall beg leave to read in the following translation:

“ For thus saith JEHOVAH God of hosts—
“ Yet once, it is a little while, ere I shake the
“ heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the
“ dry land; and I will shake all the nations;
“ and there shall come the desire of all the
“ nations; and I will complete upon this house
“ GLORY, saith JEHOVAH God of hosts.
“ Mine is the silver, and mine is the gold, saith

¹ Rom. xi. 26.

“ JEHO-

“ JEHOVAH God of hosts. Great shall be the
 “ GLORY of this house, the latter beyond the
 “ former, saith JEHOVAH God of hosts: Even
 “ in this place will I give PEACE, saith JEHO-
 “ VAH God of hosts.”

The great solemnity with which this passage is introduced, and the frequent repetition that they are the words of JEHOVAH, must surely intimate, that some farther meaning is intended, than the mere conveyance of stores, however valuable or costly, for building. Also the word translated ‘shake’ is of strong import; and there seems to be meant such a concussion or shaking, as we read of in the nineteenth chapter of Exodus, when at the delivery of the Law of Moses *the whole mountain quaked greatly*^m; and the repetition of the word adds not a little to its energy. The like expression occurs at the twenty-first verse of this chapter of Haggai, and again in Ezekiel’s prophecy concerning

^m Ver. 18. Thus Capellus; Ad Evangelicæ tubæ clangorem totus terrarum orbis concusflus est, Gentesque omnes commotæ, factaque est in ipsis mira animorum conversio, quum abjecto Gentilismo fidem Christianam sunt amplexæ.

Gog of the land of Magog, (chap. xxxviii.) in both which passages the concussions foretold, whether in the form of earthquakes^a, or in the general convulsions of nature^b, indicate some extraordinary changes and revolutions in the political or moral world ; which shall probably come to pass at some future period, when the Lord shall restore his chosen people to his favour, and perhaps reinstate them in their own land.

It is said at ver. 7. “ And I will fill, or “ fully introduce, glory upon this house ;” a consideration, which might afford sufficient satisfaction to those old men, who were able to remember this House in its former glory, as it was finished by Solomon, and who observed with tears the commencement of its renewed state. They could not expect to see again those mysterious decorations of the former temple, such as the Urim and Thummim, the Ark of the Covenant, the Glory of the Shechinah between the Cherubims, or the Cloud which

^a See Rev. vi. 12.

^b Heb. xii. 26.

over-

overshadowed the mercy-seat, and was a symbol of the Divine Presence; but yet JEHOVAH promises that he will complete Glory upon this House, or fill it with the fulness of Glory, than which nothing farther could be wanting, to satisfy the minds and expectations of good and reasonable men.

At verse 8. I would follow the interpretation of those who understand the passage, as if the Almighty intimated, that he stood in need of none of the things there mentioned; or that his treasures were of a higher and more valuable nature, than the most magnificent shrines, with their most sumptuous furniture^p. Thus this solemn apparatus seems designed to usher in the declaration, or perhaps prophetic benediction, contained in v. 9. the cause of which was previously intimated at v. 7. *The desire, or delight^q, of all the nations shall come;*

^p See Ps. l. 10—12.

^q Whether the word be singular or plural, it may have one of these senses; *deliciæ humani generis*. Here the blessing is promised to the House in general; the limitation comes afterwards.

and I will fully bring upon this House Glory. I stand not in need of the silver and the gold: Yet great shall be the Glory of this House, the latter above the former.

The comparison has usually been referred to the Temple of Solomon with the new one of Zerubbabel that was now building. And it must be confessed that the similarity of the expression at v. 3. of this chapter, “Who is left among you that saw *this House* in its first or former glory?” seems to favour this interpretation. But surely enough was said at v. 7. to satisfy the sinking spirits of those old men, that were able to make the comparison. And as no unnecessary redundancy is usually discoverable in the language, which the prophets ascribe to JEHOVAH, I rather think the expression before us has reference to the new Temple at different periods of its existence.

By *the latter*, I would understand the period

* See Bp. Lowth's *Isaiah*, c. xl. 16.

* So LXX. Μεγάλη ἐγαίη ἡ δόξα τῆς οἰκου τόπου, ἡ ἰσχάτη ὑπὲρ τὴν περιττην.

* *This House*; for it was the Temple of God, in whatever state of the structure.

after

after the rebuilding the Temple by Herod the Great. The former glory shall be considerable, or the glory of Zerubbabel's Temple before the time of Herod, when it shall be enriched with abundance of silver and gold, and a variety of valuable treasures ; but the latter glory shall exceed it ; *for in this PLACE*, not in this *House*, will I give PEACE. The change of the term *House* for *Place* seems intended in the divine Prescience to point at the alterations or renovation by Herod^u ; and whether the Temple was rebuilt entirely from the founda-

" I cannot forbear transcribing part of a very judicious note of the learned Bp. of Waterford on this passage. " It seems " to me that, *supposing* the Messiah to be prophesied of v. 7, 9. " greater precision in the language would not have been used : " for this would have led the Jews to expect a demolition of the " Temple then building, and the erection of another in its " stead. And, as Herod's rebuilding of the Temple was a gra- " dual work of forty-six years, (John. ii. 20.) no nominal " distinction between Zerubbabel's and Herod's Temple seems " to have been ever made by the Jews ; but in popular lan- " guage, these structures, though really different, were spoken " of as the same. On one occasion, Josephus himself mentions " only two buildings of the temple ; a former in the time of " Solomon, and a latter in that of Cyrus. B. J. vi. iv. 8."

He has also collected many other valuable remarks from Abp. Secker and other writers on this interesting passage, for which I must refer the Reader to his Explanation of the Minor Prophets.

tions, or whether only enlarged to its former size in the time of Solomon, or in whatever shape it was renewed; still it was in the same *place*, and was the House which the prophecy had probably in view; and which was to be adorned, not with the symbolical residence of the divine Majesty, but with the full, the excellent, **G L O R Y** of the Lord, the real and personal presence of that Prince of Peace, *who was the brightness of his Father's glory*^v, and *in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*^w.

I know of no sense in which the term *peace* is so justly applicable to the restored House or Temple of God, as that which understands it of the Messiah's appearance. If it be considered as denoting contentment, or peace of mind, for a possession, to every one that assisted in building this House, according to the LXX.^x this in general would be the ordinary result

^v Heb. i. 3.

^w Col. ii. 9.

^x Καὶ εγένετο ἡμέρα σε πριν τοῖς πάτερι τῷ οἰλίοντι τῷ αράγοντι τῷ πατρὶ τοτε. These words are found in the Translation of LXX.

of a due observance of all the divine commands: and if any thing farther should be presumed to be here intended, we read of no particular advantages of this sort, at least none that might be considered as at all corresponding with the solemn circumstances and language of this prophecy. Some promises or predictions of prosperity and plenty ^y may seem to favour this interpretation; but as they do not appear to have been actually completed by any peculiar mercies then conferred on the Jews, they had more probably an eye to those abundant blessings that were to be introduced into the world by Christ. And indeed this explanation of the LXX. has been justly considered as an interpolation, that accidentally crept into their version ^z. Moreover, the early and dangerous opposition in building their wall, the frequent interruptions to their Temple-worship, and the continual wars in which the Jews were involved during the

^y See Hag. ii. 18, &c. Zech. viii. 12.

^z See an able Discourse on the subject of this Prophecy, preached at Oxford in 1788, by the Rev. Dr. Blayney, Canon of Christ Church.

greater

greater part of the period in which this second Temple stood, until its final demolition and extirpation by Titus, must exclude the interpretation of *national* peace.

But if it be understood of the blessings which the Messiah should bring into the world, it accords with other predictions and testimonies concerning him; as with that of the Prophet Micah, who declares that he, that is, the Ruler “that was to come forth “from Bethlehem-Euphrata, at the time “that she that travaileth hath brought forth, “shall stand and feed his flock in the strength “of Jehovah, in the majesty of the name of “Jehovah his God; for now shall he be great “unto the ends of the earth, and He shall “be PEACE^a” By Isaiah he is also styled the Prince of Peace, and he that publisheth peace: in whose days, as the Psalmist foretold, *the righteous shall flourish, and there shall be abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth*^b. This was the substance of the joy-

^a Mic. v. 4, 5. See Bp. Newcome's Translation.

^b Ps. lxxii. 7.

ful

ful song, when the heavenly Host ushered the Messiah into the world : “ *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men* ^c. Our Lord himself also tells his disciples, just before he is leaving the world, *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you* ^d. And it is this peace, which by St. Paul, in his usual energy of expression, is called *the Peace of God which passeth all understanding* ^e.

Moreover who could so properly be entitled to the character of a messenger of peace, as he who was to reconcile man to God, to destroy the enmity betwixt them that was occasioned by sin, to blot out the hand-writing that was against us, to break down the wall of separation, and extend his blessings to all nations, to overthrow every adversary, open to mankind the door, and assist them in the way to eternal life and happiness ^f ?

^c Luke ii. 14. ^d John xiv. 27. ^e Phil. iv. 7.

^f Pax quam Deus hic pollicetur non est pax qua fructi sunt
Judæi sub Persarum imperio, vel sub Assamoneorum regno;
non

And this exposition seems confirmed by the Prophet Malachi in the passage of the Text. *The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his Temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant, in whom ye delight: behold, he shall come, saith JEHOVAH God of hosts.* He who shall establish a new covenant between me and all mankind, whom the house of Israel shall earnestly expect, and whom all the nations of the earth shall in some sense desire, or at least be convicted of their want of him, he shall come on a sudden, or without any fastidious parade or superb preparation, into his Temple, the joy and delight of all mankind; *behold, he shall come, saith Jebovah God of hosts.*

Accordingly, when the Saviour of the world was presented in the temple soon after his birth, good old Simeon embracing him said, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in*

non enim tanti fuit pax illa: sed est vera spiritualis et interna pax, quam Christus Ecclesiae suae acquisivit, per reconciliacionem nostri cum Deo in sanguine suo, quæque eam sequitur tranquillitas et securitas conscientiæ, quæ omnem superat intellectum. Capillus in loc.

PEACE;

PEACE ; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation^g. And at the age of twelve years, our Lord went up with his parents to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover, and was present in the TEMPLE^h, sitting among the leaders of the great Sanhedrim, and discharging the business of his Father, and part of the errand which he was sent into the world to perform.

There is another circumstance that should attend his coming, which is also mentioned by the prophet in the text, and which is of too great importance to be disregarded in the present argument ; namely, that his herald, or messenger, should precede him, who should prepare the way before him. This, according to Isaiah, was part of those comfortable words, which were spoken to Jerusalem, when the intimation was given, that her warfare was fulfilled, and the expiation of her iniquity accepted ; this was that voice which cried in the wilderness, *Prepare ye the way of JEHOVAH, make straight in the desert a*

^g Luke ii. 29, 30.

^h Ver. 46.

high-

*bigh-way for our God; for the glory of JEHOVAH shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see together the salvation of God*¹. The Saviour of all men was to be introduced into the world in the manner of an eastern monarch; and however mean his own appearance might be, his harbinger should be sent before him, in the spirit and power of Elijah², to open a way, and prepare all things for his passage; who should soften the hardness of men's hearts, and direct to the due cultivation of their minds, by exhorting them to subdue every proud impediment, by encouraging them to repentance, and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance³.

Thus was the Messiah to enter upon his important errand with the real dignity of a

¹ Isai. xl. 5, 5.

² See Mal. iv. 5, 6. "After me, says the learned Grotius
"on this passage, you shall have no prophet for a long time.
"The next shall be the harbinger of the Meffias, in whom
"prophecy shall revive. He shall be another Elias for zeal,
"and courage, austerity of life, and labour for reformation."
John the Baptist therefore, in whom this gift did revive, must
be the Elias here meant. For all the people held John as a
prophet. Matt. xxi. 26.

³ Matt. iii. 8.

sovereign,

sovereign, though at the same time without any ordinary pomp or splendour in his own person. He was to be a King, though *his kingdom was not of this world*^m; he was to be the King of righteousness and of peace; and that his kingly power might be manifested, so minute a circumstance as his royal entry into Jerusalem is likewise foretold by another prophet in these remarkable words : “ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem ; Behold, thy king cometh unto thee ; he is righteous and a Saviour, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.”

At this solemn entry the last king of the Jews made his appearance ; for now was Shiloh come, the triumphant messenger of peace, the Lord of life and glory. And when the Jews had put him to death, and, according to his own prediction, whilst he was exercising his royal authority in his Father’s house, had destroyed the Temple of his body^o ; soon after, the ruin

^m John xviii. 36.
Matt. xxi. 5.

ⁿ Zech. ix. 9. See Isa. lxii. 11. and
^o John ii. 19, 21.

of their Temple and whole state so completely followed, that there was not left one stone upon another in Jerusalem, because she *knew not the time of her visitation* ⁹.

The concurrence of those various notices, which have been already presented to your view, must undoubtedly carry with them such strength of evidence, as could scarce be resisted by candid and impartial minds. But as the necessary obscurity in which the several predictions of future events must be frequently involved, and some other circumstances in our present imperfect view of things, may leave still room for cavil; the exact time in which the Messiah should appear, and should be cut off, is pointed out by the prophet Daniel with such precision, as fills the mind of every one, who has duly surveyed it, with wonder and astonishment.

The design of his prediction at the close of the ninth chapter, amongst other things,

¶ Luke xix. 44.

was

was to point out the fate of Jerusalem, the commencement and the downfall of that renewed state. And from a certain definite period, at which the proper building of the city should commence, seventy weeks of years, or four hundred and ninety years, were to intervene, till the several events foretold in the angelic message were fully accomplished. The message seems to have been communicated to this highly-favoured prophet, just seventy weeks of days, before the termination of the Babylonian captivity, and the deliverance of the Jews by the order of Cyrus: and this period was probably meant to be considered as typical of that greater deliverance and redemption, that should be wrought by CHRIST. Thus was the discovery made to Daniel in this vision, analogous to those that were given to the other prophets, who often survey the restoration from the captivity, as typical of the redemption of the purchased possession, and look through it to the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom.

After the first mercy had been unfolded,
K and

and in which the greater and more substantial one was adumbrated, the subsequent part of the message is introduced with a solemn precaution in these authoritative words: “*Yet know and understand.*” It is probably the same expression, which our Saviour adverted to, when he cites this prophecy, in the New Testament⁴, *Who so readeth, let him understand.*

This solemn notice is followed by the distribution of the seventy weeks into such different portions, as the events required, whose accomplishment is predicted. For during this term, the city was to be rebuilt, according to the edict of a monarch, who issued an order to a wise governour of the Jews to superintend it⁵. At a farther period the Messiah was to appear on earth, to finish his work, and to *be cut off* in a most ignominious manner. And finally, when the whole plan was completed, and the business that he was sent to perform fully executed, then would follow

⁴ Matt. xxiv. 15. Mar. xiii. 14.

⁵ See Nehem. ii. 5—8.

the

the ruin of the devoted city ; for it should become desolate, and remain so, as to its antient possessors, till the fulness of God's vengeance had been poured upon the guilty state, or the desolated race that should descend from its dispersed inhabitants.

Our present concern is with that period, which describes the appearance of the Messiah and his death ; and this has been in such a variety of ways * illustrated, and proved to agree with the advent and death of Jesus

* If any attempt should be made or suggested, from the uncertainty or variety of the computation, to invalidate the exact precision of this prophecy ; as Bp. Chandler has well observed, " it is rather to be wondered, how at this distance of time learned men have been able to come to any exactness in these matters." As the completion may be evinced by almost any of the modes of reckoning, at least in some eminent degree, the design of the prediction is sufficiently answered ; and when the same truth arises from such varied computations, it is doubtless a presumptive argument in its favour, rather than against it. The nature of antient predictions appears to be such, as was meant to exercise the understandings, and engage the labours of men ; and it would be a sort of blameable supineness to reject or disregard a generally received prophecy, because its full and exact sense was not yet ascertained to the conviction of all men. For a farther illustration of my sense of this prediction, I must beg leave to refer to my Notes on Daniel.

Christ, that however men may have differed in fixing the commencement of the date, or the mode of calculation of these years, yet the general concurrence of their termination in some or other of the distinguished events relating to his life and passion, is a striking proof, that the spirit and chief end of this prophecy was the immediate testimony of Jesus'.

There are other predictions of this highly-favoured prophet, that plainly point at the Messiah's kingdom; his appearance in the world, and his future dignity. But having already considered these in another work^a, I may be the more readily excused for not adverting to them now. Let me only observe, that his passion, and the glory that should follow, appear to have been so particularly noticed in the seventh chapter, that if there could remain any doubt in the application of the astonishing prediction which we have just attended to, the language of the prophet in

^a See Rev. xix. 10.

^b See my Notes on Daniel.

this

this part of his work must tend strongly to confirm its reference to Christ. "I con-
 tinued seeing," says he, at the 13th verse,
 "in the visions of the night, when behold,
 "in the clouds of heaven was coming One
 "like the Son of man, who advanced even
 "to the Antient of days. And when they
 "had brought him near before him," or ac-
 cording to the sense of the versions, "when he
 "had offered himself unto God, He gave him
 "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that
 "all peoples, nations, and languages, should
 "serve him: his dominion is an everlasting
 "dominion, which shall not pass away, and
 "his kingdom such as shall not perish."

The One like the Son of man was the stone that struck the image in the second chapter, or the Messias; and the description of this Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, is exactly what our Saviour applies to himself, when solemnly adjured by the High-priest to declare, whether he was the Christ, the Son of God*. The other

* Matt. xxvi. 64.

K 3 characteristics

characteristics also are fully explained in the New Testament, by that dominion which is attributed to our Saviour, who is set above all principality and power, *that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth*¹; and who must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet².

Now it is but natural to conclude, that the prophet, whose capacious mind, enriched and favoured with heavenly illuminations, could point out the exaltation of the Messiah, after he had been made perfect through suffering, in such sublime language, and so strongly expressive of his elevated dignity, must be constantly filled with earnest aspirations after a full acquaintance with this great mystery of godliness, must have it so continually in his views, and in his prayers, that even his soul might be fitly qualified for the reward of that completest revelation, and the favour of the minutest discoveries of that glorious expecta-

¹ Phil. ii. 10.

² 1 Cor. xv. 25.

tion.

tion, which the providence of God should think fit to foreshew, for the consolation of his faithful and afflicted servants.

Having thus taken a compendious view of the antient predictions relating to the Messiah, so far at least as they tend to illustrate the gracious design of his coming to deliver and redeem mankind, I cannot entirely close the subject without offering a few short inferences or deductions by way of application to my general argument. And,

I. It is evident, that in no age of the world did the Almighty Governour ever leave himself without witness. The depravity of the human nature could not but be seen and felt by men of thought and reflection from the earliest times. And such men must, on due inquiry, have known the gracious intention of Providence, though not in its full extent, yet in a measure sufficient for a foundation of their faith, and to awaken their hope. In fact, we find that some imperfect traces of a deliverance were often found in the pagan

K 4 world;

world^a; and that the wiser heathens lived, not without hope, that they should be recovered from the darkness of ignorance, the perplexity of doubt, and the thraldom of sin; and that God would at some time or other restore and redeem his people. The light indeed that they had was dim, imparted to them in gradual advances, and probably derived in its best lustre by secondary communications from the original source. Nor from the natural imperfections of the human understanding, as well as the correspondent designs and counsels of God, could it ever be received in its full splendour, till the appearance of Him who brought life and immortality to light.

^a The Sibylline verses were held in high esteem long before Christ, and probably communicated the expectation of him among the Greeks and Romans. Voss. de Sibyl. Orac. c. 4. Prodiit Sibyllinum illud oraculum, Regem populo Romam naturam parturire. Hence those expressions, Dominum terrarum orbi natum, solis jubar exortum. See also Virg. Ecl. iv. and Aen. vi.

Pererebuerat Oriente toto vetus et constans opinio esse in fatis, ut eo tempore Judæâ profecti rerum potirentur. Suet. in Vesp. Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum literis contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut valesceret Oriens, profectique Judæâ rerum potirentur. Tacitus Hist. V.

II. And

II. And hence it is, as I would observe in the second place, that to us only who live in these latter days, the former revelations can shine in their true lustre, as the word of prophecy is rendered more sure from being confirmed by the event.

Sundry deliverances were promised to God's chosen people, as from the bondage of Egypt, the captivity of Babylon, and the tyranny of Satan. But the promise was ordinarily made in such a latitude, that the event alone could clearly determine the precise reference. And though enough was discoverable to enable the sincere worshipper to confide in God, to avail himself of the proposed remedy, and to partake of the promised favour; yet it was not till the grand scheme was accomplished, that the several parts and portions of it could be fairly assigned to their due allotments, or the unfathomable mercy be properly explored.

It may probably assist us in forming some judgement of the light, which men enjoyed before the coming of Christ, to reflect on the obscurity

obscurity that envelopes the prophecies which are yet unfulfilled. There is very little doubt but that at some future period of the world *the fulness of the Gentiles will come in*^b, the Jews be reinstated in the favour of God, and all be received within the pale of his Church, and the kingdom of the Saints be established. But of the exact nature of this kingdom, or the time of its appearance, or when or in what manner God's gracious purposes of universal redemption shall be accomplished, we can discover but very imperfect traces, or rather are quite in obscurity; though we have seen so much larger a draught of the general scheme, have been enlightened by him who spake as never man spake, and enjoy a continual illustration of new mysteries, and the assistance of the divine Word and Spirit. We may profitably indeed contemplate the grand design, and avail ourselves of any fresh manifestations; but we must not expect to unravel it fully, till the plan of providence shall be completed, and the events shall give us light,

^b Rom. xi. 25.

or

or till that glorious period arrives, when we shall no more know in part, but know even as we are known^c.

Lastly, It is to us apparent, even from the antient types and predictions, that the chief end of the Messiah's appearance was to make an atonement for the sins of the world. The great variety of signs and emblems, of offerings and sacrifices, the delineation of the character and offices of the Deliverer, of the condition of his life, and the circumstances of his death, all looked forward to this great end, the turning away ungodliness from Jacob, from the whole number of the true Israelites, whether belonging to that stock by nature, or ingrafted into it by faith. In what mode this would probably be effected, or at least what provision would be made for the vindication of substantial justice, and the recovery of sinful men, might be deduced in a great measure from the preceding observations, if we should not thereby anticipate what is designed to be

^c 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

evinced

evinced more amply in our subsequent discourses.

The whole world was become guilty before God; and by the rule of reason, and even by the law of Moses, as will be explained more fully hereafter, no flesh could be justified. And as without shedding of blood was no remission, an expiation must consequently be requisite. The Saviour of the world was therefore to be consecrated through suffering, that he might become our High-priest. He was to give his soul an offering for sin, that he might atone for our demerits; as well as reveal unto us the whole will of God, that he might become the guide of our life. He was not only to be a Prophet to instruct, but a Priest to ransom us, and a King to subdue all the enemies of our salvation.

It is true, the old world, either from the obscurity and perplexity of some parts of the manifestation, or the blindness and prejudice of men's hearts, did not rightly comprehend these

S E R M O N IV. 141

these merciful designs: yet they catched a view *darkly* as *through a glass*^d; and to as many as duly improved the glances which they obtained, greater communications of knowledge were probably made, so as that the mercy of God was always manifested, in the desire that none should of necessity perish, but that all should come to a competent knowledge of the truth.

^d 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

SER-

S E R M O N V.

ROMANS viii. 3.

For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.

IT will perhaps cease to be matter of wonder, that the human wisdom could discover no remedy for sin, when we reflect that the divine wisdom has been exercised in so illustrious a manner from the creation of the world, to prepare men for that extraordinary deliverance from it, which hath been wrought for us by Jesus Christ our Lord.

But an inquiry will naturally occur to the mind, from what causes it is, that as God had

had often revealed his will to men, long before the Christian covenant, none of those prior revelations should have been sufficient to deliver them from this destructive evil; but that the chief of them, the Mosaic Law, should rather seem to be represented by the best authority, as heightening it.

The insufficiency of human abilities may be allowed, and that the powers of our own reason are darkened; such is the general imbecillity of our nature, that there will be a law in our members warring against the law of our minds. The checks and remonstrances of natural conscience cannot terminate this conflict. They may convince us of our wretchedness, and incite us to inquire after a remedy; and when it is discovered, they may dispose us to accept and improve it. But they are unable of themselves to rescue us from the captivity of sin; to prevail upon us altogether, either to turn aside from the wrong path, or to pursue the right; to forsake the evil, or adhere to the good.

Yet

Yet still, if the law which God hath implanted within us, through the perversion and depravity of our nature, is incompetent for these purposes, is insufficient to be the guide of our life; wherefore is it, that a subsequent revelation from the Father of mercies hath not pointed out to us the right and perfect way, and so as to enable us to walk therein? When the great Lawgiver himself, the founder of the Jewish code, challengeth all the nations of the earth, to produce a system of commandments and ordinances, equal to that which God had directed him to set before the people^{*}, might we not expect to find herein some methods, by which mankind should be enabled to conquer their natural degeneracy, and surmount those reluctances, which proceed from the dominion of sin?

Now to obviate this apprehension, which may appear at first view to have no inconsiderable weight, it will be proper to divide the inquiry into two parts; and to reflect,

* Deut. iv. 8.

L

First,

First, on the nature of the Mosaic Law, or the design and end of its institution: and then,

Secondly, to advert to the presumed delay of the only efficacious remedy for sin.

I. Amidst the lamentable profligacy in principles and manners, in which the whole human race was too rapidly sinking, the divine Providence thought fit to separate a peculiar people, in order to preserve the knowledge and worship of the one true God in the world. For this purpose he rescued some of the posterity of his servant Abraham, as a reward for his fidelity, from the general contagion; and, by signs and wonders continually manifested among them, preserved and kept alive the knowledge of his nature, and the communications of his will.

The Law which he gave them by Moses was designed to promote this end. It was to teach them a scheme of moral duties as well as positive precepts, and the whole of those observances

observances which the Lord their God required of them. It proposed also motives for their obedience, and denounced avenging terrors for their disobedience; but they were chiefly of such a nature, as were calculated for that stiff-necked race to whom they were addressed, and were so limited and restrained by local and national peculiarities, that they could not be designed for the universal influence of mankind. Many ritual institutions and external ordinances were also enjoined in it, which could scarce be discerned to have any real use considered in themselves, and which were only of advantage as they recommended inward righteousness, or rather, as they looked forward to some better things to come.

In fact, the Law contained only a rude sketch or unfinished draught of those future good things, and is represented as such, or as having only a shadow of those blessings, by the Apostle to the Hebrews^b. The real

^b Ch. x. 1.

image, or faithful copy of them, was reserved for a future dispensation, for that last and best covenant, which brought down to us the words of everlasting life. The design of the Law was therefore to be only temporary, or preparatory to the Gospel. It might serve as a shadow, and was excellently adapted for its proper uses: but the reality, the substance, *the body was of Christ*^c. This was the ultimate end to which the former institutions looked, the grand design that was to be answered; and the Law served to train on the world for this glorious final dispensation, and, as the Apostle has justly stated, was *their school-master to bring them unto Christ*^d.

But when the church of God was grown to a proper maturity, the state of tuition ceased. When the end was answered, and the designed institution obtained, or when the justifying faith of Christ came, it could be *no longer under a school-master*^e. The Law in consequence, as it merely adumbrated the good

^c Col. ii. 17.

^d Gal. iii. 24.

^e Ver. 25.

things

things of the Gospel, or *the Law of commandments contained in ordinances^f*, must be disannulled or superseded, when this kingdom of God is come. But as it relates to moral conduct, and the influence of its precepts may affect the hearts and lives of all men, it is still in force, and is fulfilled, or fully completed in the Gospel. In this respect *the Law is ever holy, just, and good^g*; and not a tittle of this part of it will fail. For as it is a transcript of that primitive law, which was implanted originally in the human heart, so it hath received its confirmation and perfection in that excellent system, which was ordained by him, who came *to fulfil all righteousness^h*.

But yet *the Law*, as the Apostle elsewhere observes, *made nothing perfectⁱ*; could not purchase for us the pardon of our sins, could not procure for us those effectual blessings, which were reserved for the times of the Gospel. It did indeed point the attention of men to that blessed hope, which was to be

^f Ephef. ii. 15.

^g Rom. vii. 12.

^h Matt. iii. 15.

ⁱ Heb. vii. 19.

superinduced on the former promises and expectations ; but it could not realize those glorious promises, nor satisfy the desires, the wants, the capacities of men. Nay, the design of the Law was to convince them chiefly of their need of these blessings, of the grand obstacle, the insurmountable bar, that interposed between God and them, and occasioned their want of them. For *the Law was added because of transgressions^k*, was given to convince them of their sin and of their guilt, to lay open the opposition between them and a Being of the purest holiness in a more deeply affecting manner, and thus to awaken them to seek after a remedy.

And hence we find that a variety of characters are assigned to the Law, which, without attending to the considerations above specified, we might be unable properly or fully to explain. Thus in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans it is asserted, that *by the Law is the knowledge of sin^l*. There

^k Gal. iii. 19.

^l Ver. 20.

must

must be some moral rule to direct our conduct, before we can be conscious of any aberration from moral rectitude; *for where no Law is, there is no transgression*^m: this is very evident. Again, there is a like expression in the seventh chapter; *I had not known sin, but by the Law*; which is thus illustrated, *for I had not known lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet*ⁿ. The desire is natural, and the criminal part of it is evinced from that Law, which prohibits all inordinate desires and irregular gratifications: and the clearer and stronger is the prohibition, the more notorious will be the guilt. Nor does the Apostle's language appear to be confined in either passage to the simple act of sinning, or to that deviation which the very dependant state of our nature argues to be faulty; but must probably be extended to the power, the greatness, and the dominion of sin; all which are made known to us in a fuller manner by the Law, as it acquaints us more minutely

^m Rom. iv. 15.

ⁿ Ver. 7.

with the circumstances and aggravations of our guilt and iniquity.

In another place we read, that *by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified*^o; and again, *That the Law worketh wrath*^p. That is, no one can be justified in the sight of God, by observing the Mosaic institutions; not only from the obvious inutility of some of them, and the necessary imperfection also of our best services; but because there is no remedy in the strict letter of the Law provided for our sins. Without the mercies of God in the new covenant all hopes of justification are groundless. The Law without these only serves to make our offences appear more grievous, and therefore *worketh wrath*; representing our faults in a stronger and more offensive light, impressing our minds with a deeper sense of their guilt, and thereby convincing us more fully of the punishment that is due unto them, as having sorely provoked

^o Gal. ii. 16.

^p Rom. iv. 15.

the

the wrath and indignation of God ; so that *sin by the commandment is become exceeding sinful⁴.*

Hence the Apostle to the Galatians declares, that *as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse*¹. They must be obnoxious to the curse whilst they rely on those works, having no remedy in which they can trust, and being guilty of notorious breaches of that rule, which God had ordained for their observation, and threatened a curse, or sentence of condemnation, on the violation of it : for so it is written, *Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* How sadly deplorable therefore is the case of the sinner, whose hopes are confined to this strict institution ; living under a law that offers life indeed to the complete and constant observers of it, but which threatens a severe condemnation for those that violate it, and yet conscious that he breaks it almost every day !

⁴ Rom. vii. 13.

¹ Ch. iii. 10.

Thus

Thus though the Law in itself was good, furnished an excellent rule of life, which in its proper tendency would enlighten the understanding, and convert the soul^s; yet its very excellence might be urged as a reason why it was defective, as it was too perfect for man to observe, and yet supplied no relief for his deficiencies, no pardon for his faults; it gave therefore no real consolation in the present life, because offering no well-founded trust in a better. In itself considered, it was consequently *weak and unprofitable*, and *could never make the comers thereunto perfect*^t. It was *weak* through the flesh, the carnal desires and natural inclinations of men, which too frequently would precipitate them into sin, regardless of the prohibitions of the legal commandments. The lusts of the flesh they would follow; so that *sin would even reign in their mortal bodies*^u, usurp a dominion there, *lust against the spirit*^x, and *war against the soul*^y. And however good men were pre-

^s See Psal. xix. 7, 8.

^t Heb. x. 1.

^u Rom. vi. 12.

^x Gal. v. 17.

^y 1 Pet. ii. 11.

vented

vented from ruinous excesses, and recalled to the knowledge and pursuit of their duty, yet they were not indebted for their recovery to the terms of the Law, but to that faith, which always influenced the lives of the just^a, and which supplied the defects of the Law, by carrying on their views to the blessed hope of the Gospel.

It is this blessed hope, which alone can truly restore the human nature, so as to enable us to perform the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. *What the Law of Moses could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus^a enables us to execute. Christ hath redeemed us from the legal inability, and the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us^b.* For this end God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, clothed with a mortal body, which became such from the taint of original imperfection, yet free himself from

^a Hab. ii. 4. Rom i. 17. Gal. iii. 11.

^a Rom. viii. 2. ^b Gal. iii. 13.

all

all defilement ; so that *for sin*^c; or by his being made a sacrifice for sin, *he condemned sin in the flesh*. The body of Christ was subjected to that punishment of death, which was the just wages of sin ; and which he underwent, that he might suffer the condemnation due to sinners, and thereby make an atonement for the sins of the world, might redeem us from the guilt of sin, and de-

^c *For sin.* The word *αμαρτία, Sin*, is often used in the Old Testament for a sacrifice for sin ; as in Lev. iv. 3. v. 6, 7. viii. 2, 14. Psal. xl. 7. It is not unlike the Hebrew *עֲוֹנָה*, which denotes Sin, and the punishment of it, as well as the purification from it. Nothing is more usual, as Dr. Hammond observes, than this sense of the word, both in the LXX. and the Chaldee paraphrase. The expression *περι αμαρτίας* is used in like manner in the New Testament, for an offering or sacrifice for sin, as in Heb. x. 6. xiii. 11. And in the instance before us, Christ being appointed *περι αμαρτίας* means, his being made an offering for sin, or a propitiatory sacrifice ; whereby he took away the condemning power of Sin. “ *Sicut hostias, quæ pro peccato offerebantur in lege, peccati nomine vocabant ; sic et Christi caro, quæ pro peccatis nostris oblata est, peccati nomen accepit.* ” Hieron.

There is an expression of a singular nature in Hos. iv. 8. *They eat the sin, or sins, of my people.* The word in the Hebrew is *עֲוֹנָה*, and in LXX. *αμαρτίας*. The allusion is to the priests eating the victims that were offered for sin ; and the meaning of the passage seems to be, that they encouraged and partook of the iniquity, in order to gratify their avarice.

feat

feat its influence. Hence we are reconciled unto God by the death of his Son; and we consequently joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement^d. For the Law, or the strict rule, was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ^e. And if righteousness be by the Law, or we can still be justified by the mere observances of any Law, then Christ is dead in vain^f.

The design of the prior revelations was to usher in the Gospel, and the end of the Law for righteousness is Christ^g. The antient Scriptures have concluded all under Sin^h, under the dominion as well as the guilt of it: and it seems to have been a manifest intention of the old Law, to discover to us its inability to deliver us from the ruins of sin, that the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ might be a more valuable gift to them that believe.

^d Rom. v. 10, 11.

^e John i. 17.

^f Gal. ii. 21.

^g Rom. x. 4.

^h Gal. iii. 22.

The

The law or religion of nature, we have before seen, was unable to rescue us from the miseries introduced into the world by the venom of this malignant evil; nor can the Law of Moses, however just and good in its institutes, supply this deficiency. So that from the view of things in their naked constitution, or even aided and strengthened by the earlier manifestations of God's will, there is no redress for sin, no deliverance from death; but rather an aggravation of our offences, and of course a fearful looking for of judgement, till we come down to the terms of the new covenant, to the beneficial influences of the religion of Christ. And thus the expediency, at least, of our redemption will be demonstrated, as there was no knowledge of pardon, of justification, or of salvation to be obtained without it. All which blessings, and indeed all the best comforts in the present life, as well as hopes in a future one, were made known to us by the Gospel.

It is then a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world

world to save sinners¹: Or, that *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing unto them their trespasses²*. Having sent his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and condemned sin in that same nature in which it was committed, He entered into a new covenant with man; and Christ is become the Mediator of this new Testament, that *by the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance³*. The call is general, not only to the Jew, but also to the Gentile; and all that will duly receive it may come and take of the water of life freely⁴; *for as by the offence of one, judgement came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life⁵*. The rigorous terms of the law are abated, and we have now the promise of pardon of sins, of the grace of God's spirit, and of eternal life, upon conditions, to which our abilities are made quite adequate. If we deeply re-

¹ 1 Tim. i. 15.² 2 Cor. v. 19.³ Heb. ix. 15.⁴ Rev. xxii. 17.⁵ Rom. v. 18.

pent and truly amend, our sins will be blotted out ; if we are conscious of our own weakness, and apply with humility and fervency for the divine aid, it will be granted us ; and if we perform the will of God from the heart, if we sincerely and earnestly endeavour to please him, to do his will, and to keep his commandments, he will accept our services through faith in Christ Jesus, through a reliance on the merits and intercession of his Son.

Thus hath he given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness ; and to encourage us to improve these excellent gifts of his divine power, to excite us to purity of heart and holiness of life, he hath superadded *exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, who have escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust*.^o And if Christ be effectually formed in us^p, and we faithfully improve these benefits of his Gospel, it will become the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth^q. We shall by this

• 2 Pet. i. 3, 4.

^p Gal. iv. 19.

^q Rom. i. 16.

means

means be enabled completely to retrieve the ruins of the fall and the loss of paradise. For though *the body be dead because of sin*, our bodies are still mortal and subject to death, their common lot from original imperfection; yet *the spirit is life because of righteousness*¹; we shall through the spirit be restored to a new life of righteousness, and be finally raised up again to an eternal state of happiness.

So that whatever may be the power or dominion of sin, however the floods of iniquity may rage and swell, or how great soever may be the temptations of the world and the malice of the devil, yet if *God be for us*, it matters not what combination of forces may be against us. *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all*, hath hereby given us the most satisfactory assurance, that *he will with him also freely give us all things*².

II. But still another part of the enquiry will recur, namely, that admitting the Law of Moses to have not been designed as an ultimate

¹ Rom. viii. 10.

² Ver. 31, 32.

revelation, and to have no farther views than have been above hinted, yet why was the world suffered to continue so long without its necessary information ? or wherefore was the coming of this august personage, the Saviour of the world, so long delayed ? The Apostle to the Hebrews observes, that *once in the end of the world hath he appeared*^c: Why was his coming therefore postponed to so late a season? As this delay has been one of the strong holds of infidelity, I must not suffer it to pass altogether unnoticed, although the objection has been often refuted by learned men^d.

^c Heb. ix. 26.

^d Dr. Lardner, speaking of an objection of Celsus the Epicurean to the Christian religion, taken from the late appearance of Jesus in the world, has the following just remarks, vol. viii. p. 42. “ God never neglected mankind ; he was constantly “ teaching them in the works of creation, and in the ordinary “ methods of his providence. Extraordinary methods are a fa-“ vor : several such had been sent of old to the Jews, and be-“ fore their time to the patriarchs : at last he sent Jesus Christ. “ We have certain proofs of his mission and great character. “ The seasonableness of his coming, and the wisdom of sending “ him at the time he came, ought not to be disputed : but the “ favour should be thankfully received, and carefully improved “ after due examination, and observing the evidences of his “ mission.”

Hæc est igitur animæ liberandæ universalis via, id est, uni-
versis

In answer to it then let it be observed, that the expression *in the end of the world*, should rather be rendered, the consummation or perfection of ages, meaning with reference to the sense which the antient Jews entertained of the world's state, the last ages, the latter days, or the times of the Messiah. The several periods that had gone before were so many different ages, according to the different dispensations of God's favour, which had been discovered to the world. The last age, or the closing of the ages, was that in which the Son of God was manifested. And if we knew no reasons to assign for this late manifestation, we might still with thankfulness acquiesce in the measure, and with due humility look up for the propriety of it to the wisdom of God. For *it is not for us to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power*^w. His counsels in general are un-

versis gentibus divina miseratione concessa.—Nec debuit, nec debet ei dici: Quare modo, et quare tam sero? quoniam mittentis consilium non est humano ingenio penetrabile.

Aug de Civ. Dei, l. x. cap. 32.

^w Acts i. 7.

searchable, and his ways past finding out. Who can understand his way, or who can declare the works of his righteousness? *Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens, and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Thy righteousness is like the strong mountains, and thy judgements like the great deep^x. Who hath known the mind of the Lord?*

Still however there are reasons, and very strong ones, for this measure of God's providence, which we may be able to assign, and that whether we attend to the evil which occasioned it, or the remedy.

I. With respect to the evil. That sin had reigned in the world, had disturbed the peace of men's minds and consciences, and filled them with dreadful forebodings of a state of misery; and that the human wisdom had laboured, long laboured, in vain, to find out a satisfactory relief from this universal evil, are truths which we have already established in

^x Ps. xxxvi. 5, 6.

the former part of this work. And hence we may readily discern one considerable advantage that must arise from the delay of Christ's coming; to convince mankind of their own insufficiency, of the universal prevalency of this evil, and that after so long a trial they were still unable to relieve themselves. And as their own best efforts could not effect a deliverance from that sad degeneracy in which they were involved, they could not but acknowledge the necessity there was of flying to some better power, of having recourse to the divine aid, for strength to subdue this their innate and inveterate foe.

That, for this purpose, the Messiah should come into the world, to save his people from their sins, had been intimated to the whole race of mankind in a variety of ways, long before his actual appearance. Indeed the whole œconomy of the Jews, of the chosen people, must be considered, as having a principal reference to this coming of Christ. The ritual of their worship, the great variety of offerings and sacrifices, the service of the Tabernacle and of

the Temple, the solemn day of expiation, the feast of the Passover, most of the usages and most of the laws of the people of Israel⁷, seem to have been designed, as so many previous indications of the redemption, that should be purchased for us by the merits and atonement of Christ Jesus our Lord.

The old world therefore had experienced considerable benefit from the prospect of his coming, chiefly by a reliance on the various intimations of God's gracious intentions, as well as the actual discoveries and renewed confirmations of his promised mercies. Nor had they suffered any hardship by the delay, as his redeeming influence reached to all, who lived by the faith of the anointed of God, either before or after his appearance. They could not indeed but feel and lament the sad calamity and fatal tendency of sin, and this in a greater and more alarming degree, the more notorious it was made to them by the awful

⁷ Quem Christum—omnia gentis illius promissa, omnes prophetiae, sacerdotia, sacrificia, templum, et cuncta omnino sacramenta sonuerunt. Aug. ad Volus. Ep. 3.

and

and infallible revelations of God's will. And hence they must wish, the wiser and more considerate at least, must earnestly wish, for the manifestation of that glorious Light, which should remove all their dismal apprehensions, dissipate all the shadows of prior dispensations, and shine out to the world in perfect day. But still the longer the expectation continued, the stronger the malignancy of the evil, and of course the value of the remedy, appeared. And therefore the generations of old might feel within themselves this farther advantage by the delay, namely, that whilst the whole creation was groaning and travailing in anxious expectation, the increase of their faith, cherished by this earnest and blessed hope, would fill them with the more comfortable assurance, not only of a release, but of a reward.

But if we proceed to reflect on the remedy, we shall have abundant reason to admire the wisdom of God, in having taken every imaginable precaution for the conviction and the welfare of his reasonable creatures. Great and astonishing were the purposes, which the Son of God in the likeness of our flesh

was designed to accomplish. He was indeed openly ² to appear for these ends but once ; but by his one offering he was to perfect for ever them that are sanctified ¹. And therefore when the world was grown to a proper maturity, when every thing was prepared which

² Though Christ appeared openly in the human nature but once, yet he seems to have appeared often before in the world as an Angel or Messenger. Instances of this are frequent in the Old Testament. Without recurring to any earlier notices, it was he probably, that strove with Jacob at Peniel, when he saw God face to face, and was blessed by him. Gen. xxxii. 24. It was this Angel of Jehovah, that appeared to Moses in a flame of fire in the bush, Exod. iii. 2. which on another occasion went before the camp of the Israelites in the wilderness, and together with the pillar of the cloud removed and stood between them and the Egyptians, ch. xiv. 19. that came down also in the sight of all the people on mount Sinai, when Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice, ch. xix. 11, 19. See also Acts vii. 38. It was probably the same Angel, that appeared to Balaam, as he went with the princes of Moab, and who assured him, "the word that I shall speak unto thee, that shalt thou speak." Num. xxii. 35. And the man that appeared to Joshua as captain or prince of the host of the Lord, whom Joshua worshipped, ch. v. 13, 14, was probably the same with the Angel of the covenant, mentioned by the prophet Malachi, or the Lord that should come to his Temple. In Isaiah lxiii. 9. He is styled the Angel of God's presence, who saved and redeemed his people in their affliction ; and it was this divine Aoyos, whom the Jews tempted in the wilderness, and thereby in the Apostle's language tempted Christ. 1 Cor. x. 9.

¹ Heb. x. 14.

the

the wisdom of God saw fit, either with a reference to the ages that were past, or a prospect to those that were future, when the appointed hour in which all things that were written of the Messiah should receive their completion, or *the fulness of the time*^b was come, *God sent forth his son, made of a woman*^c, born into the world after the ordinary manner, and *under the Law*; so that he should be subject to all the customs and ordinances of that Law, should be qualified to fulfil all the types of him contained or intimated therein, become the seed of the woman that should bruise the serpent's head, as well as the seed of Abraham, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed.

The world was generally united at Christ's appearance under one great empire, and consequently the means of conveyance of impor-

^b In 1 Tim. ii. 6. the expression is, a testimony *in due time*, or *in the proper season*; in 2 Cor. vi. 2. it is, *in an accepted time, the day of salvation*, such as had been long before predicted by Isaiah in like words, ch. xlix. 8.

^c Gal. iv. 4.

tant

tant information were more easy and ready, than when it had been in a more divided state. The intelligence therefore of the birth of a Saviour could be much more expeditiously communicated, and more widely diffused amongst the bulk of mankind. And as this empire now enjoyed a state of peace and freedom from long and distressing wars, it was on this account a period better calculated for the appearance of the Prince of peace, and the propagation of those blessings, which were to be introduced with him.

Learning also and a thirst for knowledge had overspread the countries subject to the Roman name, and hence men were better prepared to examine into the reasons and grounds of this salvation brought by the Son of God, as well as to sift and scrutinize the evidence for the truth of it. And it is remarkable that in the seat of empire, where every sort of learning shone in its fullest lustre, even here the religion of Christ had the surest hold, and was embraced and disseminated with the greatest zeal and assiduity. St. Paul speaks of the *Saints* that

that were in *Cæsar's household*^d, and intimates that his bonds in Christ were *manifest in all the palace*, to all the judges in the emperor's courts, as well as to all other persons^e. Neither learning, power, or interest could make any successful opposition to the reception and progress of the Gospel.

Nor must we forget to observe that at this very period a general expectation of a Messiah prevailed^f: so that several false pretenders arose, such as were Theudas and Judas of Galilee; who boasted themselves to be persons of mighty consequence, and drew after them a considerable number of followers^g. Under

^d Phil. iv. 22.

^e Phil. i. 13.

^f That it prevailed among the Jews, see the following passages, Mat. iii. 2, 3. Luke ii. 25. iii. 15. xix. 11. John i. 19, 20. Acts xxvi. 7. And we may conclude that the like expectations prevailed among the Samaritans, a nation hostile to the Jews, or who had no dealings with them, from John iv. 25, 29, 42. See Bp. Chandler's Vind. b. ii. ch. i. and the note at Sermon IV. p. 136.

^g Hegefippus, as appears from his fragments in Eusebius, reckons Simon Magus, as one of the false Christs of that age: and Origen in the second century mentions him and Dositheus, as the two that assumed the title of Meffias in the Samaritan nation. Chand. Vind. p. 383.

this

this expectation also the eastern magi came to Jerusalem, when they saw the star^h at our Saviour's birth ; and undertook a journey from a very remote country, to discover the King of the Jews, and to worship him.

He was to be a King indeed, but advanced with honours and dignities very unsuitable to the monarchs of this world ; yet still the wisest of men would bear testimony to his magnificence. He was to be a Priest also as well as a King, the chief end of whose sacerdotal office was to expiate our iniquities. His character had been foretold by the prophets long before he actually appeared ; the several offices also that he was to sustain, and the several engagements that he was to fulfil. A great variety of passages in the Old Testament have been applied by the Evangelists to the history of our Saviour ; and those several predictions which speak of the birth, the education, the course of life, the nature of the doctrine, the

^h Some of the Fathers, and especially Chrysostom, intimate, that it was *μέγας φωτεινός*, or that the luminous body had the appearance of a star, but not the truth of its nature.

circumstances

circumstances of the passion, death, and resurrection of the Messiah, some of which have been cited in my former Discourses, have been with the greatest punctuality verified in Jesus Christ. Truths these, which I now mention, chiefly to remark upon them, how strongly they evince that time to be the best, in which so many concurrent proofs of the reasons of his mission agree and are united.

From all these considerations, and many more that might be suggested, it must abundantly appear, that the time, in which the Saviour of the world was manifested, was the best that could be devised according to human apprehension; and therefore we have the greatest reason with firm conviction to acquiesce in the measure, and with the fullest gratitude to accept the mercy, when recommended to us by the wisdom of God.

S E R M O N VI.

HEBREWS ix. 26.

—*He appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice
of himself.*

TH E fundamental principle of true religion is humility. We must be conscious of our depraved and sinful state, before we can with any sort of reason expect or look for a deliverance from it. The sober mind is naturally cautious, and the humble mind distrustful. This cautious diffidence will quickly bring us to a conviction of our impotence and sin. And he that is truly sensible of these failures, will not only in earnest seek after a deliverance, but when it is offered, will study to qualify himself for the due reception of its benefits. Our minds thus

thus affected will be fitly prepared for a candid examination of any new light, and a right improvement of any additional information, that with sufficient authority shall be recommended to our notice. For it is a vain imagination to conceive, that the goodness of God was ever meant to supersede our own endeavours; whereas on the contrary it was graciously designed to relieve, assist, and strengthen them. The riches of his forbearance and loving kindness should have such a commanding influence on our gratitude, as to lead us to *repentance from dead works, and to serve the living God*^a.

Both the confidence then and the indolence of pride will prevent men from becoming the true disciples of the holy and the humble Jesus. And on this account it was, that at the first preaching of Christianity, *not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, were called*^b. Self-importance must always offer an insuperable impediment to the self-denying influence of the religion of Christ. But to the

^a Heb. ix. 14.

^b 1 Cor. i. 26.

poor

poor in spirit, to those, who from a deep insight into the human nature are convinced of their wretchedness and sin, and their need of a Saviour, we may hope with success to *preach Christ crucified*; to the men of this world, even yet in its design and benefits, either a *stumbling block* or *foolishness*; but to the meek and teachable, the modest and impartial mind, *Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God*.

In discoursing on the expediency and prediction of our redemption, it was scarce possible to avoid frequent intimations of the general plan in which it was accomplished. But in order to do justice in some suitable degree to this most important part of my subject, I must now proceed to a more distinct view of the methods of our deliverance, as effected by our Priest, our Prophet, and our King. And in the present Discourse I shall propose to shew how the guilt of sin hath been expiated, and our pardon procured; how the sinner

^c 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

N

hath

háth been triumphantly freed from that condemnation, which in common justice was due, and by the revealed law of God threatened, to the revolters from his authority, and the opposers of his will.

Now the Text tells us, that Christ *appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.* He was therefore to be put to death, and his death was to be a sacrifice. As his death is an event of such vast importance, the grand hinge on which the whole fabrick of our redemption turns, it will be proper to offer a few suitable reflections on the circumstances of it, before we advert to this great design of it.

That the Messiah should suffer and die for our sins, was almost as clearly foretold in the Old Testament, as the sufferings and death of Christ are recorded in the New. Every thing that was thus written of him was punctually fulfilled in Jesus. His whole life was a continued series of afflictions; and though after he had entered on his public ministry, he went about

about every where continually doing good, his virtues were calumniated, and his beneficence requited with the most ungrateful returns. But his distresses were greatly multiplied, and sorely aggravated, toward the concluding scene of it. The malice of his enemies was bitter and distressing to a very great degree; the desertion of his friends should seem not less so, for *all his disciples forsook him and fled*⁴.

But all this was as nothing, compared with the great grief which he endured, when his Father's displeasure lay heavy upon him. What a load of trouble was the Saviour of the world to sustain, when God laid on him the iniquities of all men! The apprehension of this heavy burden occasioned that violent conflict between his human nature and his sense of duty, which St. John hath so finely drawn in his twelfth chapter: *Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify*

⁴ Mark xiv. 50.

thy name^c. So great also is his agony represented by St. Luke, when near the mount of Olives he prayed that the cup of his sufferings might pass from him, yet in full resignation to the will of his Father, that his sweat was so large and copious, as to resemble great drops of blood falling down to the ground^f.

Yet wherefore should the apprehension of death be so very afflicting to this great and exalted character? There must have been something peculiarly grievous and embittering in his last sufferings, or we can scarce conceive he would ever have discovered such sore amazement at their approach. Look at the constancy and resolution of the martyrs for his faith, how little they regarded their lives in his cause; and we must surely conclude, that the captain of our salvation had something much more heavy and distressing on his mind, to have been at any time so struck with dismay at the prospect of his sufferings, as to need the support of angels to strengthen

^c Ver. 27, 28.

^f Luke xxii. 44.

him.

him. But the unparalleled poignancy of his sufferings will be readily explained, when we come to contemplate the design of his death.

At length arose the whole multitude of the Jews, of his own nation, and his brethren, to whom especially was the word of his salvation sent, and led him away to the Roman governour. And when Pilate himself had examined him, pronounced him innocent, and wished to have nothing to do with this just man, the people were instant with loud voices, soliciting and importuning that he might be crucified. Notwithstanding the remonstrances of the governour, and the innocence of the Saviour, *the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed*^s. And after he had been scourged, he was, in consequence of a most unjust sentence, led away, bearing his cross, to be crucified. *And they crucified Jesus, and with him two others, malefactors, one on his right hand, and the other on the left*^h. That the scripture might be fulfilled,

^s Luke xxiii. 23.

^h Ver. 33.

which faith, *and he was numbered with the transgressors*¹.

Indeed, so many antient predictions were fulfilled in him, whilst he hung upon the cross, that the selection of these, and the illustration of their accomplishment, might be sufficient to convince us, that Jesus was that suffering Messiah, to whom gave all the prophets witness; though he was also, what the superscription that was written over him denoted, *the king of the Jews*^{*}.

It has been already observed in the course of this work, that the twenty-second Psalm had a peculiar reference to Christ, and some parts of it are strictly applicable to no one but him. To confirm this observation, it may not be amiss, as we proceed, to take notice of those instances in which the application is made by the Evangelists, and to point also at other references which they make to passages in the Old Testament, as this may serve

¹ Isa. liii. 12. Luke xxii. 37.

² Luke xxiii. 38.

in

in some respects as a key, by which we may interpret the antient allusions. *All they that see me laugh me to scorn*, says king David, *they shoot out the lip, and shake the head, saying, He relied on JEHOVAH, that he would deliver him, let him deliver him if he delight in him*¹. *They that passed by*, saith St. Matthew, *reviled him, wagging their heads, and repeating, among other reproaches and calumnies, these very words : He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him : for he said, I am the Son of God*^m. In another place we read, that they *parted his garments, casting lots*ⁿ; and St. John particularly points at the reason why they cast lots for one of his garments, because *the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout*^o. And thus they fulfilled what was prophetically spoken in the same Psalm, *They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots*^p. They filled also a spunge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and offered it to his

¹ Ver. 7.^m Ch. xxvii. 39, 43.ⁿ Matt. xxvii. 35.^o Ch. xix. 23.^p Ver. 18.

mouth⁴: by which was verified another passage, in the sixty-ninth Psalm, spoken of David in the first place, but, agreeably to our Lord's own intimation, most properly applied by the Evangelist to Christ.

Whilst our blessed Lord was hanging upon the cross, two instances of his loving-kindness were displayed, which cannot fail to engage our peculiar notice: one was, the recommendation of his mother to the regard of his beloved disciple, which shewed his attention to the real concerns of this life; the other, his accepting the repentance of the penitent thief, and declaring that he should be with him that day in Paradise, which manifested his influence in the interests of a better life.

And now when all things were nearly accomplished, which he himself knew were designed to be fulfilled in his death, about the ninth hour he cried out with a loud voice in those words at the beginning of the same

⁴ John xix. 29.

twenty-second Psalm, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!* Then commanding his spirit to his Father, and having declared, *it is finished, he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost*.

What astonishing wonders followed this awful event! The veil of the temple was rent in the midst, the sun was darkened, and the darkness was continued; the earth quaked, the rocks rent, the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints arose. So that when the centurion, and the soldiers that watched Jesus, saw the earthquake, and the course of nature thus convulsed, they were struck with great consternation, and made this voluntary confession, *Truly this was the Son of God*.

It is not improbable that these convulsions might be some of those shakings and commotions, to which the prophecy of Haggai in the second chapter alludes. For though they

¹ John xix. 30.

² Mat. xxvii. 54.

did

did not precede the manifestation of Christ, or his appearance in the Temple, they were the solemn consequences of it, exhibited at that completion of the blessing of peace, which the desire of all nations was to effect through his death; whereby he laid open the innermost veil of the Temple, that by it he might presignify his triumphant entry into the Holy of Holies above.

To have suffered death in any shape might have been deemed sufficiently grievous for this innocent person: but to be exposed to a death so painful and ignominious as crucifixion, a punishment inflicted only on the lowest and vilest malefactors, was a most severe indignity on the Lord of life and glory. And yet this sort of death appears to have been marked out for him in the divine prescience and design long before. As the afflicted people looked at his emblem, the serpent in the wilderness, so it was foretold, that they would look at him whom they pierced¹. And this circum-

¹ Zech. xii. 10.

stance

stance was noticed by the Evangelist, and referred to the insult which the cruel soldier offered, when he pierced his body, just dead, with a spear^u. They were, according to the words of the same twenty-second Psalm, to pierce his hands and his feet^x; and St. John observes in the Apocalypse, that when he cometh in the clouds, every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him^y. It was intimated in the institutions of Moses, that not a bone of him should be broken^z. And when the soldiers found that he was dead already, they declined breaking his legs, although they brake the legs of both the malefactors that were crucified with him. In a great variety of other instances his death corresponded with that signal type of it, the sacrifice of the paschal Lamb; but more especially in the time in which he was offered, which was on the fourteenth day of the month at even, or between the evenings, betwixt the declining and the setting of the sun.

^u John xix. 37. ^x Ver. 16. ^y Ch. i. 7.

^z See John xix. 37. Exod. xii. 46. Numb. ix. 12.

Indeed

Indeed it is observable, that most of the instances of correspondence with the previous intimations noted by the Evangelists, relate either to the paschal Lamb, or the declarations of king David ; as if it was meant, that by his sufferings should chiefly be indicated his sacerdotal and regal characters, or that royal and unchangeable priesthood, in which, through death, he was to continue for ever. For I must just add, that it was not possible that He should be holden of death, and therefore on the third day he was restored to life ; hereby ratifying and confirming the design of his death, verifying the predictions also that had been spoken of his release from it, and thus exhibiting the most convincing proof and sensible demonstration of his divine mission ; for *he was declared to be the Son of God with power by his resurrection from the dead* *.

But I must dwell no longer on this circumstantial account of Christ's death, how-

* Rom. i. 4.

ever

ever important in itself, or in the extended chain of God's providence; but must proceed to explain the chief design of it, which was, that he should be a sacrifice for sin.

As all men had sinned, they had come short of the glory of God^b; and whilst the guilt of sin was uncancelled, and the dominion of sin unsubdued, there could be nothing less than an irreconcileable separation between God and sinners, between a Being of unspotted purity and perfect holiness, and such as had estranged themselves from holiness, and had been entangled in the snares and fascinations of sin. Now it was the primary design of the Saviour of the world to cancel the guilt of sin, by making an atonement for the sinner, to remove his obligation to punishment by suffering in his stead, to bear the weight of our sins in his own person, or *to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.* This is the explanation, which is suggested by the faith of every true and orthodox Christian.

^b Rom. iii. 23.

But

But the Socinian heresy recoils at this measure, and labours to interpret the Scriptures in a quite different manner, rejecting the mysterious nature of the doctrine, or rather striving to conform it to the narrow comprehension of the human mind. It is allowed, indeed, that the Son of God suffered and died, to put away sin, yet not in the proper acceptation of a sacrifice; but only that we might enjoy the benefit of his sufferings, by a due improvement of his example.

That Christ died for our benefit is then acknowledged on both sides; but that the Socinian notion doth not express the full design of his death will be evident, if we only state the plain sense of that design according to the Scriptures. So that we may advance in the discussion of our general subject, whilst we combat an antient error, revived in somewhat different shapes in modern times, but which in every form tends to diminish the value of the Christian atonement, and even ultimately to reduce the Author of our salvation

tion to a rank far below the real dignity of his highly exalted nature.

Now that the death of Christ was a sacrifice or atonement for our sins, is, I say, by plain intimation, or direct assertion, confirmed in the Scriptures. It was thus foretold of the Messiah by the Evangelical prophet: “ Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; and by his stripes we are healed:” and again, “ If his soul shall make, or shall be made, a propitiatory sacrifice, he shall see a seed, which shall prolong their days, and the gracious purpose of JEHOVAH shall prosper in his hands.” And it is recorded of Christ in the New Testament, that *He was manifested to take away our sins*^d, and therefore gave his life a ransom for many, for all^e: that *he bore our sins in his own body on the tree*^f; and that *He was made sin, or a sacrifice for sin, for us, who knew no sin*^g: and this in consequence of

^c Isa. liii. 10.

^d 1 John iii. 5.

^e Αντιλαύτησον. Compare Mark x. 45. with 1 Tim. ii. 6.

^f 1 Pet. ii. 24.

^g 2 Cor. v. 21.

a voluntary

a voluntary acceptance of his Father's proposal, intimated in those remarkable words, *Lo, I come to do thy will, O God^b!* The Father provided the sacrifice, and the Son freely accepted the undertaking, and laid down his life for his friendsⁱ: *For he had power to lay it down, and power to take it again^k.* And, *as he loved us, so he gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour^l:* who therefore saved us, not for works of righteousness that we have done, but of his own love and free mercies in Christ Jesus.

St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, hath placed this mercy in a still more valuable light. *For God, faith he, commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us^m:* that is, He died in the stead of sinners, in the same sense, as is intimated in the preceding verse, that one man dies for another. And St. Peter also tells us, that Christ suffered for sins, the just

^b Heb. x. 9.

ⁱ John xv. 13.

^k John x. 18.

^l Ephes. v. 2.

^m Ch. v. 8.

for

for the unjust, that he might bring us to Godⁿ. So that, when we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son: who, as St. John observes, is *the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world^o.* As the sentence of death had passed upon all men, for that all had sinned, so hath he reconciled us all *in the body of his flesh through death^p*; having thereby abolished death, and destroyed him that had the power of it, that is, the Devil.

It may greatly help to illustrate the nature of the Christian sacrifice, to compare it in various particulars with the sacrifices of the Old Testament. In every sacrifice amongst the Jews, the offering was always to be without spot or blemish, the very best and most perfect in its kind. Thus a lamb was to be of the first year, and without any sort of defect^q; a male without blemish was to be the offering of the herd and of the flocks^r; the meat-offering was also to be of fine flour un-

ⁿ 1 Pet. iii. 18.^o 1 John ii. 2.^p Col. i. 22.^q Lev. ix. 3.^r Lev. i. 3, 10.

O

leavened,

leavened^o, and a young bullock without blemish was to be chosen for a sin-offering^t. In conformity with these, Christ our sacrifice, as to his human nature, was *holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners*^u; and in his divine nature was the eternal Son of God, which added such efficacy and dignity to the sacrifice, as to make it of the most consummate purity as well as infinite extent. The chief of the gifts and sacrifices were offered by the High Priest under the law for the errors of the people: and our High Priest is *the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world*^v. The High Priest alone went into the second tabernacle once every year into the holiest of all, not without blood^w. Christ our High Priest of good things to come, *by his own blood entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us*^x; the price of which redemption was his blood, which he shed for the life of the world: for as almost all things by the Law were purged with blood;

^o Lev. ii. 1, 4.

^t Ch. iv. 3.

^u Heb. vii. 26.

^v John i. 29.

^w Ex. xxx. 10. Heb. ix. 7.

^x Heb. ix. 12.

so without shedding the blood of Christ there would have been no remission under the Gospel. Those sacrifices indeed were offered year by year, and were only the patterns of the true; but Christ was once offered really to bear the sins of many, and *by his one offering hath been perfected for ever them that are sanctified*^y.

In the Levitical Law the offender was to put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering, and it should be accepted for him to make atonement for him^z; and thus was he to transfer the guilt from himself to the sacrifice: and on the great day of general expiation, the Priest solemnly transferred the acknowledged sins of the people on the exiled goat, whilst the other was retained to make the due satisfaction with his blood^x. In like manner Christ came to sustain, as well as to bear away, our iniquities, and to suffer and die for our sins: who, though at his first appearance he was loaded with sin, yet *unto*

^y Heb. x. 14.^z Lev. i. 4.^x See Lev. xvi.

them that look for him shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation^b. His appearance the first time was without sin in himself, as well as it will be the second ; but at the first time he was burdened with our sins, and sustained them in his own body, when he laid down his life for all men, and died in their stead.

Justly therefore might St. Paul contemplate Christ as our passover, because he was sacrificed for us^c. His death was a real sacrifice, with more extensive effect, and beneficial influence, but in as proper a sense, as the sacrifices under the legal œconomy. It was an expiation, or propitiation through faith in his blood, for all our sins ; and *the free gift* of his meritorious atonement *came upon all men to justification of life*^d. For he died for our offences, and rose again for our justification^e. His life was that voluntary ransom, whereby the world should become reconciled unto God, and their trespasses not imputed to them, that

^b Heb. ix. 28.^c 1 Cor. v. 7.^d Rom. v. 18.^e Ch. iv. 25.

being

being justified by his blood they might be saved from wrath through him^f. And his resurrection plainly evinced, that he had made full satisfaction for the sins of those for whom he died.

There is therefore now no condemnation for them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit^g; who, relying on his meritorious sacrifice, endeavour to live as becometh the Gospel of Christ, in constant obedience to his laws. For who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died^h, who as our mighty Redeemer hath sustained the weight of his Father's resentment against our sins, hath expiated our iniquities, hath blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, having nailed it to his crossⁱ.

To convince us of the reality of this atonement, the Almighty appears to have conde-

^f Rom. v. 9.

^g Ch. viii. 33, 34.

^h Ch. viii. 1.

ⁱ Col. ii. 14.

scended to accommodate his mode of acting to the ordinary forms of commutative justice among men. Our redemption was purchased, the terms proposed and accepted, the price of the redemption paid, the covenant sealed with blood, the deed that was adverse to us cancelled, by being bored through with a nail, according to antient custom, and fastened to the cross ; new conditions appointed, and new powers were given : every thing was done by our surety, which either strict justice or legal usage could reasonably exact, and therefore a full and sufficient satisfaction was made^k.

* I am aware it has been objected to this sort of reasoning, that it represents the method of God's dealings with men in the light of a traffick or merchandize. And perhaps the familiarity of the terms may have had sufficient influence with some minds, to induce them to consider the measures as unworthy of the divine Majesty, and that every sort of satisfaction must be altogether unnecessary for a Being of unlimited power and goodness. This objection is very ably refuted by the present learned Bishop of St. Asaph in his fifth Sermon at the Warburton Lectures. To ask, " what need there any satisfaction to the divine Nature, would be in effect to ask a reason why the constitution of things is what it is. There is nothing in such an arrangement inconsistent with the perfect rectitude of the divine Nature, and many good purposes may be conceived to be answered by it, even within the sphere of our own observation. That God does require

And hence the Gospel of Christ, which containeth these glad tidings of our redemption, is called the New Testament or Covenant; the blood by which it was ratified, is *the blood of the everlasting Covenant*¹; and the Surety, who brought these wonders down to us, is in the book of the Revelations styled, *the faithful and true Witness*, or the Martyr^m.

Nor let the mystery of a vicarious sacrifice stagger the faith of the honest inquirer, or perplex the impartial mind. In all the ways and works of God, whether of nature or of grace, there are mysteries. The religion of nature, as well as the revelation of the Gospel, is in many points mysterious: and our knowledge must be very confined, and our faith very contracted, if we will admit no

" require such a satisfaction, has been the sense of mankind in
 " all ages, however acquired. And this opinion is confirmed
 " by the revealed word of God, from one end to the other
 " of the Old Testament." See Bagot's Serm. p. 132. I
 would only add, that we should be careful not to be deceived
 by mere words, as the very best things may be sometimes
 disparaged by degrading terms and vulgar analogies.

¹ Heb. xiii. 20.

^m Ch. iii. 14.

truths but what we can fully comprehend. In whatever method it should please God to save us, we should thankfully acquiesce at least in the favour; in whatever way he will reveal to us the words of eternal life, we should accept them as his words, acknowledge the benefit, and comply with the conditions.

We know, indeed, that the Lord delighteth in goodness, that his mercies are infinite, and we continually experience the most convincing as well as amazing proofs of his beneficence. But we might as well suppose God not to be, as not to be just, as not to be the Almighty *Rewarer of those that diligently seek him*², as well as an Avenger of those that neglect or disobey him. The voice of nature as well as his revealed word strongly attest, that He interests himself in the moral government of his rational creatures, and that He will by no means spare the guilty. And what then could a guilty creature expect from infinite Justice, but the sorrows of his dis-

² Heb. xi. 6.

pleasure?

pleasure? Now were we summoned to plead our own cause, or to vindicate our innocence, we know that *every mouth would be stopped, and all the world be acknowledged guilty before God*^o. Could any mode of recovery be suggested by our own efforts, it must be our repentance. But being sorry for our sins is not being innocent; and though it is the utmost which our own reflection could suggest towards pacifying the offended Majesty of Heaven, yet it could give us no assurance of his reconciled favour. Nay, in the very best of us it is so very imperfect, as to make us justly dread his displeasure, and to be deeply apprehensive, that, instead of being a repentance unto salvation, it would be unassisted, but of little avail in his sight, who searcheth the heart, and knoweth all things.

It is true, the men of Niniveh appear to have had recourse to this remedy even from natural principle, and with good success: but then they were doubtful of its efficacy, *Who*

^o Rom. iii. 19.

can tell if God will turn and repent? That He could not accept of our repentance, or that his justice must indispensably require other terms for our pardon, we dare not venture to affirm^a. But when he has proposed to us a satisfaction, when he has contrived an atonement for sin,

^p Jonah iii. 9.

^a It would be great presumption in man to attempt to limit the omnipotence of God, or to fix any bounds to his agency, except absolute impossibilities, or things which cannot be done. Yet as the human nature is under his moral government, we may form some judgement as to moral possibilities, from our observations and reflections on those appearances, which recommend themselves to our best notice. Can we then think that he hath implanted the knowledge of his will in our hearts, and confirmed it by additional revelations; that he has by the same methods encouraged us to the observance of his will, and threatened to punish our disobedience; that we feel the influences of his resentment in ourselves, and behold the effects of it in those around us: and can we think, that all these precautions were of so little use, that we might restore or recover ourselves from transgressions, without even such compensations, as the ordinary ideas of justice among men would require? Would not such sentiments tend to make the Law of God of none effect, and even to evacuate it? to incline us to believe that the sanctions of the divine Laws would be of less force and efficacy than of those amongst ourselves?

Men may frame for themselves new notions of the divine justice, and either explain it away, or confound it in fanciful refinements and unintelligible explanations of benevolence. But it must be better to acknowledge the weakness of their own understandings, than to involve themselves in inextricable perplexities by attempting either to unfold the several

when he has intimated this his design by varied resemblances, and declared it in positive assurances, we are not to enquire what he could do, but accept with thankfulness what he has done. What if God was willing to exhibit his irreconcileable aversion to sin and love of holiness in the strongest manner, or to make known the riches of his grace and abundant favour to mankind ! What if on these accounts he sent his dearest pledge, the son of his love, into the world, a voluntary offering, *to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself!* Surely we ought with the utmost gratitude to lay hold of the tenders of such wonderful mercy, to embrace the proposals which offer forgiveness to the repenting sinner, to confess that the salvation is

veral mysterious perfections of the divine nature, or hoping to explain them more fully by consolidating the whole into one. Touching the Almighty we cannot find him out, but we know that he is excellent in power, and in plenty of justice (Job. xxxvii. 23). And rather than strive to unravel his nature, we had better humble our own, by subjecting our reason to the eye of faith, and submitting to those discoveries, which have so wonderfully displayed a most beautiful harmony of the divine attributes, where mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other ; and the astonishing work of our redemption is so far accommodated to the measure of our understandings, as to make it appear suitable to the wisdom of God, though in a mystery.

an

an act of God's free grace, 'while it provides for the vindication of his justice and the honour of his government, and at the same time to acknowledge that God *is just*, whilst *he is the justifier of him, who believeth in Jesus*'.

Nothing is more evident than that no real satisfaction was ever obtained by human wisdom in this important business. Nor did the encouragements in the Law of Moses derive any efficacy from the Law itself; but were only of use as they looked forward to the redemption of the new covenant. And it is worthy to be received by all men as an incontrovertible truth, that we are washed, we are sanctified, we are justified by the blood of Jesus¹. *Him hath God raised from the dead, and given him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God*². By his suffering of death he was crowned with glory and honour; by having thus drank of the brook in the way, his head was exalted; for in him his Father was well pleased, and having made him perfect through

¹ Rom. iii. 26.

² 1 Cor. vi. 11.

³ 1 Pet. i. 21.

suf-

sufferings, he was to bring many sons unto glory, and to become the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him^u.

We could have had no deliverance from death, had it not been given us by God; nor would this have been matter of such triumphant satisfaction, if a deliverance from sin likewise had not been obtained for us by the merits, and made known to us by the revelation, of his Son. But now having confidence through the atonement of his blood, we may with joy and comfort and full assurance of hope look forward through this veil of flesh to the sacred recesses of eternity, even to that *eternal life, which was brought to light by the Gospel, and is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord*^v. *If a man die, shall he live again?*^x is no longer to those a difficult, a dreadful problem, who have the evidence of many infallible proofs, that Christ being raised from the dead, became the first fruits of them that

^u Heb. v. 9.

^v 2 Tim. i. 10. Rom. vi. 23.

^x Job xiv. 14.

slept,

slept¹, and know that He who raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise them up also by Jesus².

Nor does this resurrection import no more than a bare rekindling of the vital principle: the deliverance of the true Christian extends much farther, and reinstates him in the secure possession of every endowment and advantage he can be despoiled of by death, or supplies infinitely more valuable in their stead.

Is death a dissolution of his body? Does it destroy that workmanship of the hand of the Almighty, so fearfully and wonderfully contrived, so curiously framed to convey through the organs of sense a distinct notice of the numerous objects and operations of the material world, and even to furnish the mind with ideas for thought and contemplation? He has the less occasion to enquire, whether an ethereal vehicle may still attend the soul after the dissolution of this earthly tabernacle, or what latent powers it may exert in the naked state

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 20.

² 2 Cor. iv. 14.

of

of separation, who trusts it shall again be clothed; but no more with a vile, a corruptible, a natural body; but a body incorruptible and spiritual, fit for the conversation of the angels of God, and fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ Jesus our Lord.

Is death a departure from this world? Does it remove us from our possessions, our friends and acquaintance, and all the dear relations of life? The sincere follower of Christ knows that this life is only his pilgrimage, and while he is thankful for the accommodations of his journey, can joyfully quit them all, that he may be admitted to his Father's house, to an inheritance that fadeth not away, to a celestial society of fathers and brothers and mothers and sisters, of all who have heard the word of God, and kept it^b: when he shall arrive, whether he is now carried by faith and hope; when he shall in open vision and complete enjoyment actually *arrive unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general*

^a Phil. iii. 21.

^b Mark iii. 35.

assembly

assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirit sojourns of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.

Lastly, is death generally attended with afflictive pains, and sometimes an agony of suffering? He, who has learned to bear hardships as a good soldier of Christ, can support himself with the consideration, that as *the Captain of his salvation was made perfect through sufferings*⁴, so through him shall these afflictions be sanctified to perfect the work of his patience, humility, and resignation to the will of God; that his warfare will now shortly be accomplished; that this last conflict will transmit him to receive, amidst the united acclamations of saints and angels and songs of eternal triumph, the prize of his high profession, the crown of immortality; and the extremity of his pain only hasten his conveyance to those rivers of pleasures, which flow at God's right hand for evermore.

^c Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24.

^d Heb. ii. 10.

Now

S E R M O N VI. 209

Now unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God; to him, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, three Persons, and one God, be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.

• Rev. i. 5, 6.

P S E R-

S E R M O N VII.

JOHN xv. 3.

*Now ye are clean through the word which I
have spoken unto you.*

THE design of religion is to improve mankind in their duty to God. The design of the Christian religion is to reform sinful men, and to assist them in their duty through the mediation and intercession of Christ. Whilst it holds up the mirror to nature, and shews us our weaknesses and infirmities, our holy religion exhibits the strongest aversion to voluntary errors, and will have no residence with sin. It hath through wonderful mercy provided against our mistakes and frailties, discovered a deliverance from the consequences of them, and destroyed the

whole body of death for us by the sacrifice and expiatory atonement of the cross. By this unspeakable gift of God in Christ, the hope of former ages has been accomplished, the ransom paid, the justice of God satisfied, the act of free grace passed, the debt cancelled, and the repenting sinner restored to a capacity of the highest favour.

Great indeed is the consolation, with which the minds of fallen men must be filled, from a conviction of such a pardon for sins past: but it would still be clouded with doubt, if not sink back into despair, were there no farther hopes that the body of sin might be destroyed in us; so that we should no longer be subject to its dominion, or at least be slaves to the lusts thereof. Even reason must convince those, who enjoyed no better light than that of nature, that a just and righteous God could never delight in any thing that continued unholy or impure; that sin must always be repugnant to his nature; and that, unless the sinner should become renewed or changed, he could not be acceptable

able to him, “ who is far separated from forward thoughts, and will not abide where “ unrighteousness entereth ^a. ”

In the times before the Gospel it was expected, that there would be *a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness*^b; which fountain was not only to wash away the guilt thereof, but also to wipe out its stain. But the generations of old did not enjoy that comfortable assurance which is held forth to us, on whom the light of the Gospel hath shined, and who are acquainted with the whole tenour of this embassy of peace. The glad tidings of which not only announce, that sin is subdued for us by the sacrifice of Christ's death, but that it will also be subdued in us by the riches of his grace. The blood of Christ hath paid the penalty, and cleansed us as an expiation; but as a consequence of this, it must be the word and spirit of Christ, that must *purge our consciences from dead works*, and enable them *to serve*, so as to be finally

^a Wisd. i. 3, 5.

^b Zech. xiii. 1.

accepted by, *the living God*^c. And therefore it is, that the Apostle St. John, who in one part of his writings tells us, that *the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin*^d, in the text informs us in the language of our divine Master, *Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.*

The allusion is to the pruning and cleansing the branches of the vine: the wild excrencences are restrained, the dead parts are cut off, the vigorous shoots regularly trained, and the bearing parts purged and encouraged. And thus in the human life, the luxuriances must be curtailed, the devious and irregular shootings broken off or corrected, and the parts that promise good fruit be trained and carried on by wholesome discipline and discreet management, that they may be enabled to bring forth more fruit.

It is an allusion not unfrequent in the writings of both the Old and New Testament.

^c Heb, ix. 14.

^d 1 John i. 7.

The

The prophet Isaiah was struck dumb, because he was a man of polluted lips, and dwelt among a people of polluted lips : but the heavenly Messenger assured him, when the coal from the altar had touched his lips, *thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged*^c, or cleansed ; where the expressions are equivalent ; to purge sin is to take away iniquity. The author to the Hebrews observes, that when *Christ had by himself purged our sins, he sate down on the right hand of the Majesty on high*^f : He had purged them by the offering of his blood, and the influence of his word and power. And by the due application of these blessed means we are exhorted also in like manner, to *purge out the old leaven, or the leaven of malice and wickedness*^g ; to *wash and make ourselves clean, and put away the evil of our doings*^h ; to *cleanse our bands, and purify our hearts*ⁱ ; that thus we may answer the glorious end of our Saviour's appearing ; *who gave himself for us, that he might redeem*

^c Isa. vi. 7.^f Heb. i. 3.^g 1 Cor. v. 7, 8.^b Isa. i. 16.ⁱ James iv. 8.

us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works^k.

The design of the Gospel then was to reconcile man to God, not only by removing the weight of that woful sentence which had passed on the whole human race by reason of sin, but also by instructing and informing the world, and thus reducing it to a hearty obedience to the divine will, and a comfortable hope in the divine mercy. For this end it was beforehand announced to the people of God, as the new Covenant of Peace, as the good Tidings that would be a light to the Gentiles, would open the eyes of the blind, and extend salvation to the ends of the earth.

It hath effected these gracious purposes by various methods :

I. By revealing such important doctrines as the world before understood not aright, or had only an imperfect intimation of, and here-

^k Tit. ii. 14.

by

by relieving us from much uncertainty, and fixing the rule of our conduct on the surest grounds.

The light, indeed, in which it represents the Deity himself, is the most admirable, and at the same time the most amiable, that can be conceived. It not only considers him, as a Being possessed of all possible perfection, the Maker and Preserver of all things; but as peculiarly attentive to the welfare of his reasonable creatures, governing them agreeably to the laws of infinite justice, tempered with the most gracious intentions of mercy and loving-kindness. That though He will by no means spare the obstinately guilty, but will inflict on them the severity of his inexorable wrath; yet he is bounteous and benign to all who are studious to become fit objects of his mercy, is placable for our offences, pities our weaknesses, and relieves all our wants and necessities. Though He is one, undivided, omnipresent Being, He is distinguished into three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: a distinction made known unto us,

us, probably to convince us of the stupendous greatness of our salvation ; that the evil of sin was so malignant, that our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, must each be engaged in recovering us from it.

Now what can be a more powerful principle of moral action than the conviction that we have an omniscient Being thus continually superintending us, who is a witness to all our conduct, and even *a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*¹? And what can more strongly influence the minds of men to a rectitude of life and manners, than the consideration that this wise and gracious Being interests himself in our welfare, and discovers his very nature so far to our understandings, as may convince us that he loves us with the most tender regard? Or what can have a more natural tendency to excite in us an aversion to sin, than the reflection that the Parent of all endeavours to win us by the most condescending and engaging motives, to com-

¹ Heb. iv. 12.

ply

ply with that constitution of things which his wisdom hath ordained, to cleanse ourselves from the evil of sin, in order to be delivered from that punishment, which in the present system of things must otherwise be its unavoidable consequence ?

Moreover, whatever conceits may enter into the minds of speculative men concerning the origin of this evil, yet no better explanation can be devised, than what the word of God points out unto us, the abuse of our primitive liberty. All things must be pure and perfect, that proceed from the hands of a perfect and good God. But his creatures may be formed with powers, which, when left to their own management, they might be capable of abusing. How far the wise designs of his providence in the comprehensive plan of the government of the universe may be answered by such measures, our limited faculties can never explore. Certainly *all his works are known unto Him from the beginning of the world*^m. Yet, as our know-

^m Acts xv. 18.

ledge

ledge is but small, and our reasonings shallow and very imperfect, we must be satisfied with, and indeed thankful for, those illuminations of his will and purposes, which He is pleased in any measure to make manifest unto us.

Now we learn from his word, that by the abuse of our liberty our nature is infected with an original taint ; that, in consequence of this transmitted corruption, we are all become liable to death. *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men*ⁿ. That though the seeds or principles of goodness are not extirpated by this infection, yet we too commonly find in ourselves a proneness to sin^o ; that *the good*

ⁿ Rom. v. 12.

^o “ As to the Fall of Man, however the thing may be disputed, the effects of it are visible in the strange proneness of human nature to act against reason and conscience, ‘ that is, to act in plain contradiction to itself, and its own principles.’ Jenkins’s Christian Relig. vol. ii. p. 247.

There is one reflection, which can scarce fail to suggest itself to every considerate mind ; if our first progenitor, who was made upright, was overtaken by temptation, the very best of us ought, surely, to be upon our guard, or, in the language of the Apostle, “ not to be high-minded, but fear.” Rom. xi. 20.

that

that we would, or approve, we do not, whilst the evil that we would not, that we do^p: and thus from the infirmity of our nature, influenced by the machinations of the same evil spirits that were the original cause of our woe, we too often fall into actual and even repeated transgressions. In order to recover us from this wretched state, when we had been long enough detained in it to convince us of our own inability, it pleased God to send his Son into the world, to redeem and save us, by methods the most powerful and astonishing, and at the same time the most efficacious and satisfactory. Our blessed Redeemer assumed the human nature, lived and taught mankind therein, and at length suffered and made an atonement for the sins of the world, sealed the covenant of our pardon with his blood, and ensured it to us by his resurrection.

In consequence of this, we who were lost and alienated from God, and doomed to death,

^p Rom. vii. 19.

have

have again access to our heavenly Father through the mediation of his Son, are initiated by baptism into his new covenant, and made the adopted children of God : and if we live by the faith of Christ, and adhere to the truth as it is in Jesus, shall finally become *children of God* in the most glorious sense, *being the children of the resurrection*^q. If we believe and repent, *our sins shall be blotted out*^r; and should we afterwards fall into temptations, and through the infirmity of our nature be overtaken by some offences, yet *we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who will be still the propitiation for our sins*^s.

This is the distinguishing doctrine of our most holy Faith ; which therefore is sometimes styled from hence Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. *Jesus Christ is the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord*^t. He will shower down his blessings upon this

^q Luke xx. 36.^s 1 John ii. 1, 2.^r Acts iii. 19.^t Ephes. ii. 20, 21.

building,

building, which is his Church, and continue to support, protect, and encourage it; will rule over it in righteousness, provide all things proper for his faithful servants, extending his protection beyond the present state, and raising them up again to a new and better life. And finally, He will separate the good from the bad by an unalterable sentence and an eternal partition; admitting the former into the most glorious mansions of light and joy, to the full view of the beatific vision, the contemplation and enjoyment of God; whom their souls shall entirely love, in whose presence they shall triumphantly rejoice, and delight in the everlasting celebration of his glories. But on the other hand banishing the wicked, the impenitent sinners, *to everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power*^u, consigning them a portion with those apostate spirits, whose counsels and practices they followed in the present life, and whose associates in torments they will remain for evermore.

^u 2 Thess. i. 9.

These

These are the chief of those doctrines, which the word of Christ, that *brought life and immortality to light*^x, hath revealed unto us. They are such as may be presumed to carry with them their own conviction, forcibly to strike on the understandings of all considerate and impartial men, as the most powerful and affecting springs of action, and the justest principles of moral conduct. Those who refuse to receive them must in general shut their eyes against the truth, and are therefore culpable for want of faith; and those who admit their truth, and will not suffer it to have its due and natural influence, are no less criminal, as they reject the faith through the corruption of their minds, the wickedness of their lives, or the impenitency of their hearts^y.

* 2 Tim. i. 10.

^y If any, from a strong attachment to system, a model of instruction which they may have framed for themselves, or any other sort of prejudice, should object to these Christian doctrines, that they are not delivered in such an order and arrangement, as they might conceive suitable to the wise plan and perfect designs of God's providence; let them recollect, that the Scriptures are intended for the use and edification of all men; to inform their understandings, exercise their talents, and

Yet still as the human nature is constantly assailed by manifold temptations, and the powers of our reason are feeble; these doctrines of Christianity are not left barely to their influence on the understanding, but re-

and improve their hearts. That these most important truths are therefore judiciously interspersed amongst a variety of other useful or entertaining lessons, to call forth the industry, quicken the researches, animate the fidelity, and in one shape or other suit the inclinations, and gratify the diligence of all wise and thinking men. To accommodate them, indeed, to those who have less leisure and less ability for enquiry, the principal doctrines have been collected from the first ages of Christianity, and arranged into a summary form and method. So that all that desire to obtain a competent share of knowledge in our holy religion, to avail themselves of the merits of a Saviour, and to be blessed with a true saving and justifying faith in Christ, may find the access easy, the encouragement great, and the way secure.

But where men are obstinate and impenitent, and even desperately wicked, the spirit of God will not always strive with these. *They have eyes and see not, ears and hear not, neither will they understand.* "There is a degree of evidence and of "influence," as Mr. Bryant has justly remarked, "to which "we are not entitled. When a person acts against conviction, "and turns from the light, God does not always leave him in "that state of twilight; but adds to his blindness, and brings "on a tenfold darkness. When people pervert their best "gifts, they will be farther corrupted to their ruin: and "those who are guilty of wilful and obstinate folly will be "doomed to judicial infatuation. This was the case of Pharaoh and the Egyptians." Observ. on the Plagues, p. 380.

Q

commend

commend themselves to our attention by such arguments, as may rouse and engage the passions in its favour. So that the religion of Jesus is designed to operate on every faculty of the soul: by hope and by fear, by joy, love, and interest, by the apprehension of the most awful and weighty recompences, and the most alarming and never-ceasing terrors, to deter men from the most tremendous ruin, and excite them to the pursuit of the most transcendant bliss.

II. But that the knowledge of these important truths may have its due effect, its cleansing influence within us, it must sink into our hearts, so as to renew and reform our lives. And that it may produce this effect, the word of God hath, secondly, pointed out unto us a rule of life, by which our conduct should be directed, and hath afforded us the purest precepts of duty, as well as the most animating encouragements to every virtue.

The Gospel hath made known to all men the whole will of God, hath brought down to us

us *the words of eternal life*^a, and instructed us in those duties which must qualify us for the enjoyment of everlasting happiness. It acquaints us with the full extent of our duty to God, whom we are to love with the most sincere and unbounded affection, serve with the most profound reverence and filial submission, and obey in the spirit of the truest piety and warmest devotion. It exhorts us also to love and value the image of God as impressed on our brethren of mankind, to perform all the social and relative duties towards them, which our reciprocal engagements may call for; to be just, merciful, kind, tender-hearted, patient, and charitable to all men^b. Even our bitterest ene-

^a John vi. 68.

^b Amm. Marcel. I, 22. says of Christianity, nil nisi justum suadet et lene.

"Οσα παρὰ πᾶσιν καλῶς εἴηται, Χριστιανῶν ἴσι.. Just. Mar. Apol. I.

Affirabant autem Christiani, hanc fuisse summam vel culpæ suæ, vel erroris, quod essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire; carmenque Christo, quasi Deo, dicere secum invicem; seque sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, né adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent: quibus peractis morem fibi discedendi fuisse; rursusque coeundi ad capiendum cibum, promiscuum tamen, et innoxium. Plin. S. Traj. L. x. Ep. xcviij.

mies are intitled by the peculiar authority of Christ to a share of our love, and the affection of our hearts ; so that we are *to bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us*^c. In short, we are to make the regard to ourselves the rule of our conduct to our neighbour ; and as we would that men should do to us, we must do also to them likewise^d.

Moreover the word of God restrains us from perverse desires, as well as sinful actions ; checks every wrong tendency of our nature, curbs our eager inclinations, corrects our wayward passions, dissuades us from irregular gratifications, and animates us to the contemplation, the pursuit, and the practice of all virtue. It expects us likewise to *use this world as not abusing it*^e ; to be diligent in our respective callings, circumspect in all our conduct, watchful against every danger, and ready to every good work^f.

^c Mat. v. 44.

^e 1 Cor. vii. 31.

^d Ch. vii. 12.

^f Tit. iii. 1.

The

The genuine influence of Christianity will actuate our principles, as well as guide our practice; nay, its chief concern is with *the hidden man of the heart*^s; and therefore it recommends a cultivation of the power of godliness rather than the form of it, or that the latter should be made subservient to the former; so that we may *live by the faith of the Son of God*^b in a constant, steady, and uniform obedience to all his laws. It allows of no undue preference of such duties as may suit our inclinations to others; neither to be merciful at the expence of justice, nor to substitute charity for men in the place of piety to God; nor to cultivate mere morality on any other foundation, but that which must give it its truest efficacy, its conformity to the will of God in Christ Jesus.

It particularly instructs us to guard against the pernicious effects of self-will and self-love; levels its most powerful artillery against pride of heart, and inculcates poverty of spirit, pe-

^s 1 Pet. iii. 4.

^b Gal. ii. 20.

nitence and humility, as previous indispensable qualifications for the kingdom of heaven. It directs in our lapsed estate what methods we must pursue for pardon, assistance and strength; what occasions there are for mortification, self-denial, and prayer. It encourages us to upright conduct by the intimation that we may gain a superiority over all temptations and dangers, and shall become *more than conquerors through him that loved us*ⁱ; and farther animates us to a steady perseverance in all holiness by the comfortable assurance, that how great soever may be our difficulties, how severe and afflicting our distresses, yet *in due season we shall reap, if we faint not*^k.

Finally, the religion of Christ exhorts us to raise our affections above the things of this world, and to place them on the prospects, the pursuits, and the glories of another world; it requires us to be spiritually minded, to be transformed in the renewal of our minds, and to aspire after that real change, that renovation

ⁱ Rom. viii. 37.^k Gal. vi. 9.

of heart and purity of life, and constant and continual advancement therein, *which must make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*¹.

Nothing without the holy influence of these principles and duties can cleanse our minds, and purify our hearts: nothing short of this real change can bring us to heaven. No ill-founded notions of imputed righteousness, or the impeccability of the elect, no visionary schemes of arbitrary predestination or capricious respect of persons, no presumptuous reliance or antinomian confidence in the merits of Christ, no fanatic persuasion of nominal regeneration without real and vital improvement, no zeal for the honour of religion, or supposed transferable substitution of other men's virtues, no real or pretended gifts of the most exalted nature, either of utterance or languages, of the most splendid exertions, or most brilliant actions; nothing but the principle of divine love within us, manifested by a suitable conformity in our practice and habitual purity in our lives, can

¹ Col. i. 12.

effectually work out our salvation, can *cleanse us from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit*^m, or according to the Gospel constitution can bring us through Christ to the blissful mansions of those blessed spirits, whose delightful employment is to praise and adore their most holy God for ever and ever. And yet after all, after the sincerest and best obedience ; so many are the failings of our nature, such the imperfection of our purest holiness, and so exalted the reward of our future state of glory ; so disproportionate to our best services, and so far beyond our strictest obedience ; that we are with justice taught to consider ourselves, especially as contrasted with our reward, in the light of unprofitable servants ; and to acknowledge that *eternal life is the free and unmerited gift of God*ⁿ.

III. But still neither the doctrines nor the duties, however excellent in themselves, and well adapted to the exigencies, the desires, or the consolations of mankind, can fill up the

^m 2 Cor. vii. 1.ⁿ Rom. vi. 23.

measure

measure of that provision, which the Gospel of God affords for our edification and instruction in the words of eternal life. For, in the third place, we have these duties illustrated, and the influence of these doctrines manifested, in the life of Christ, that faithful copy, and most apposite example of all virtue.

The human mind is, and must always be in the present state of things, very much influenced by the objects of sense. The generality of men will not often allow themselves time for much reflection. External objects frequently strike them so forcibly, that they presently gain their approbation, and prejudice their minds in their favour, without permitting us to contemplate them in all their circumstances, much less to reason upon them with cautious deliberation. Where the objects close with our commonly received notions of rectitude, or fall in with our natural convictions, they win upon us with surprising alacrity^o, and the powers of both our sensible and rational faculties are

^o Longum est iter per præcepta, breve et efficax per exempla. Sen.

united

united in their support. Now this is the sort of evidence, which is conveyed to the mind by example ; and as the principle of imitation is very strong and prevalent within us, so nothing can more recommend doctrines, or enforce precepts, than the view of their influence exemplified and displayed in the human life.

To convince by such evidence as this, and to fulfil all righteousness, our blessed Lord came into the world in such a situation, as might exhibit his character in the most varied lights, and to the most general notice. Instead of appearing in the greatest pomp of external majesty, the Son of God condescended *to take upon him the form of a servant*^{*}; thereby to instruct us in that fundamental principle, humility, to wean us from pride and selfishness, and to draw us off from a partial fondness for the pleasures, the vanities, the honours of this world. In this humble department what a multitude of important duties did his life exhibit to our imitation,

* Phil. ii. 7.

such

such as equanimity in distress, contentedness in his allotted circumstances, a generous contempt of the things of this world, and a steady dependance on the Parent of all, the Giver of every good gift! What exercises of piety to this Almighty Being was he often engaged in, so as to pass whole nights in prayer to God! How submissive to his will, how resigned to his disposal, how attentive to his pleasure, how zealous for his honour throughout the whole conduct of his life!

Nor was our Lord's charity to men less exemplary than his piety to God. In all his commerce with them we find him prudent, gentle, benign; attentive to their welfare, embracing every fair opportunity to instruct, correct, and reform them; discovering the dispositions of their minds, and directing his encouragements or reproofs towards them, as they might be presumed to take the best effect. Under their contumelies and reproaches he was meek, calm, acquiescing; the severities of their ill usage he sustained with invincible patience, requited their evil with good, *when*

he

*he was reviled, reviled not again^q, but prayed for his revilers and murderers ; thus fulfilling that declaration, which in the prophetic mind had long before marked his character, that he *made intercession for the transgressors*^r.*

The relative duties of life the Saviour of mankind discharged with all proper attention ; was subject to his parents, submissive to the ruling powers, affectionate to his disciples and friends, and comported himself toward those who sought his instruction, so as to manifest himself to have always had an eye to his Father's business. He mourned and wept over his country, bewailed the impending fate of Jerusalem, submitted to have his life taken away by a most unjust judgement, and when a view of the heavy weight of his Father's wrath occasioned the severest struggle that he had ever experienced in his arduous engagement, he terminates the difficulty with this pious ejaculation, *If this cup may not pass*

^q 1 Pet. ii. 23.

^r Isai. liii. 12.

away

away from me; except I drink it, tby will be done *.

View him in his more publick walks, and you will behold him no less attractive and amiable than in the private life. At the age of twelve years, when he was presented in the temple, he intermixed with the Jewish doctors, and bore a part in their conferences ; so that all that heard him were astonished at the readiness of his conceptions and the adroitness of his replies. When he attended the marriage-feast at Cana in Galilee, he wrought a miracle in compliance with the wishes of his parent for the more comfortable accommodation of the guests ; and whilst he was engaged in his public ministry, his very food was *to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work* [†]. He ever shewed himself an example of the most consummate innocence and spotless purity, was never surprised by any artful combinations or ensnaring questions, was never at a loss in the most trying emer-

* Matt. xxvi. 42.

† John iv. 34.

gencies,

gencies, but always discovered the truest simplicity, guarded with the most discreet wisdom. And yet, when the multitude, struck with the circumstances of his appearance and the power of his mighty works, would have made him a king ; however just his pretensions, and exalted his character, he withdrew from their intended honours, as *his kingdom was not of this world*^u.

Attend him farther to the final scene at the close of his life: what resignation in his whole deportment, and yet what majesty ! How gentle was his reply to the miscreant that betrayed him ; how full of tenderness his aspect to the disciple that denied him ; how submissive his carriage to the governour that unjustly condemned him ; and how full of compassion was his soul for those wretches that crucified him, when he uttered that fervent prayer, *Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do*^w.

^u John xviii. 36.

^w Luke xxiii. 34.

It

It were vain to attempt an enumeration of the whole series of his virtues. As one end of his life seems to have been to fulfil the whole duty of man to God, and thereby literally satisfy the strictest demands of the divine justice, so what hath been offered may suffice to shew what *an example he has left that we should follow his steps*^x; who, in his own emphatical words, hath exhibited himself to us, as *the way, and the truth, and the life*^y.

What great reason have we then to look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith^z; whom if we look up unto, we shall be enlightened; if we set him always before us, he will guide us by his eye, and instruct us in the way wherein we should walk; and if we would have boldness in the day of judgement, even as he was, so must we be in this world^a.

Such are the principal methods which the word of God, or the religion of Jesus, hath

^x 1 Pet. ii. 21.

^z Heb. xii. 2.

^y John xiv. 6.

^a 1 John iv. 17.

offered,

offered, to recover mankind from the dominion, and to guard them from the snares, of sin. The view of things proposed to our belief carries with it a clear, strong, and awakening conviction : the duties offered to our practice are founded on such reasonable and powerful evidence, enforced by such cogent and alarming motives, and above all illustrated by so bright and perfect an example, that they cannot but approve themselves as worthy of all acceptation, cannot but prevail on our hearts to submit to their influence, if we would consult our own safety or happiness.

But beside the internal marks of truth and conviction which these doctrines and duties bring with them, they are enforced to our notice by such external attestations as must fully discover their divine original. What a long series of predicted events, increasing with new and gradual evidence from the beginning of time to that awful period, when they received their designed completion in the death and resurrection of Christ, do we find record-ed

ed in the word of God? What astonishing, and at the same time amiable instances do we meet with therein, of the course of nature being diverted, the order of things changed, the visible interpositions of a miraculous power demonstrated, called by St. Paul *the demonstration of the spirit and of power*^b, the sudden and repeated production of such gracious and mighty works as must surpass all the art of man, which were foretold of the Messiah, and which were executed by the power of God in the person of Jesus Christ. He was the real Word of God, the incarnate Deity, the *Prophet mighty in deed and word*^c, *the true light that lighteneth every man*^d; with a view to whose manifestation the whole system of things had been conducted from the beginning, in whose life and character all that illustrious arrangement, which we have endeavoured to point at in the preceding parts of this work, received its full accomplishment, and under whose guidance the glorious plan of redemption will still be carried on, until, and

^b 1 Cor. ii. 4. ^c Luke xxiv. 19. ^d John i. 9.

R with

S E R M O N VIII.

HEBREWS vii. 25.

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

IT is one great excellency of the Christian Religion, that it comes recommended to us by almost every sort of evidence, and makes its appeals to all the powers of the human mind. It not only addresses the reason in a great variety of unparalleled methods, but offers such conviction to the senses of men, as must plainly demonstrate the divine interposition, to all who will admit its testimony, or attend to its history with impartiality and candour. The example of Christ was a continued series of sensible demonstration of the

with a prospect to, that awful *Day*, when God shall judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom he hath ordained, and whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead^e.

Now what is more natural, than that such an illustrious scene of things should gain the assent and approbation of our understandings, together with the cordial concurrence of our lives and conduct? The duties of faith and obedience are thus founded on the strongest evidence, on the most rational conviction, and are the main points of that reasonable service which Christianity requires of man to God. To illustrate the various particulars and minute branches of this reasonable service, what would it be less than to explain the whole duty of man?

Let me just observe that our faith must be active, lively, comprehensive; must renew our minds, warm our hearts, influence our

^e Acts x.ii. 31.

whole

whole practice: that we must not content ourselves with a mere speculative assent, or enwrap our main attention in the favourite contemplation of any sublime and exalted truths, without suffering them to produce their due effect upon our lives. But we must pay a general and universal respect to all the truths of the Gospel, and study to obey, and thereby *adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*^f. From a frequent review of the word and will of God, a devout meditation on the duties of the Christian life, a steady eye on that pattern of all perfection Jesus Christ the righteous, we must endeavour to obtain this faith, without which it will be impossible to please God^g; and which must have its fruit unto holiness, that the end may be everlasting life^h.

^f Tit. ii. 10.^g Heb. xi. 6.^h Rom. vi. 22.

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vital truths which he taught, and his mighty works with the same kind of evidence illustrated also the doctrines which he delivered. The grand doctrine, which he came to inculcate on men, was that of a resurrection to everlasting Life, by and through the merits of his own atonement. And of the reality of this he even ~~youchsafed~~ to convince the senses with intuitive evidence, being himself, after he rose from the dead, carried up from earth to heaven, in the presence of a multitude of witnesses ; who all observed, and with their eyes followed this translation of their Lord, till *a cloud received him out of their sight*^{*}.

Thus after he had finished his work upon earth, he ascended up to his heavenly reward ; he was conveyed by an actual exaltation of his human nature into the highest heavens, there *to appear in the presence of God for us*^b ; there to go on with the glorious busines he had here begun, the salvation of men ; there *to save to the uttermost those that come unto*

^a Acts i. 9.^b Heb. ix. 24.

God

God by him, those that acknowledge him as their Redeemer, embrace him as their Saviour, and obey him as their Lord. Whilst he remained upon earth, he finished all that could be done for us here below. He paid the ransom, made the atonement, gave us a rule for our conduct, and left us an example. He subdued sin, and removed the disqualifying circumstances; he opened the door, and pointed out the way to eternal life.

But something farther was necessary to enable us to walk therein, some new assistance to make us rise above the power and dominion of sin, and to qualify us for our everlasting inheritance. For this purpose our triumphant Saviour hath *ascended up on high*, that he might become our Intercessor and Advocate, might *lead captivity captive*, and *impart his gifts unto men*^c. God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name^d; who after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sate down at the right hand of God^e,

^c Ps. lxxviii. 18. Ephes. iv. 8.

^d Phil. ii. 9.

^e Heb. x. 12.

that he might finish the grand work of our redemption, might perfect for ever them that are sanctified, *seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us*; he ever liveth and reigneth the Son and Word of God, *having on his vesture and on his thigh the name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords*^f.

As all power was given him in heaven and in earth, he now exercises this power in the assistance, protection, and government of his church. This church upon earth has often experienced many hostile attacks, and is still in a militant state against a variety of enemies. Our mighty Redeemer assists it with his grace, strengthens it with his interest, and supports it with his authority. Upon each of these points I would wish to be more particular, in order to shew farther how the body of sin may be fully destroyed in us, through the mercies and intercession of Jesus Christ our Lord.

I. And, first, let us reflect on the assistance

^f Rev. xix. 16.

afforded

afforded mankind by the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

Our blessed Lord before his death assured his disciples, that he would not leave them comfortless; but that he would pray the Father, and he should give them another comforter, the Holy Ghost, who should abide with his followers for ever^g. This spirit of truth, with which the apostles and first teachers of Christianity were plentifully filled, *brought all things to their remembrance*^h, which their divine Master had said unto them, taught them all necessary truths, enabled them to work miracles to confirm those truths, and endued them with such abilities and extraordinary powers, as were expedient to convert the world, to bring mankind to the knowledge and reception of the Gospel of peace, and to propagate the religion of Jesus to those that were near, and *those that were afar off, even as many as the Lord their God should call*ⁱ.

^g John xiv. 16, 18. ^h Ver. 26.

ⁱ Acts ii. 39.

And

And when the original design of disseminating the Truth over the various nations of the earth was answered, then their extraordinary gifts were withdrawn, as being no longer necessary. But in their place Christians were supplied with what was as expedient for them, and as beneficial to them, the general grace and assistance of God's spirit, which was to continue with them to the end of the world.

That any influence of this sort is communicated to men, or indeed that we stand in need of it, is denied by those proud disputers, who measure the operations of the divine agency by the imbecillity of their own understandings. What is above their reason must be rejected, as well as what is contrary to it. No impressions must be allowed, however supported by analogical reasonings, unless they can be imputed altogether to merely natural and ordinary means. Hence those important truths will be disregarded, which men of deep reflection from a review of our nature have generally acknowledged, and which the Scriptures so plainly declare, *that we are not sufficient of ourselves*

*selves to think any thing as of ourselves, but
that our sufficiency is of God^k.*

Others appear in an opposite extreme so to magnify the grace, as to consider themselves altogether guided by irresistible impulses in the concerns of religion ; or in fact to be little more than the mere mechanical instruments of a supernatural agent. An opinion that may be favourable to their own indolence or vanity, but which is quite irreconcileable with that true state of the matter given by St. Paul, who exhorts us to *work out our salvation with fear and trembling, because it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure^l*. The spirit of God, which worketh with our spirit, was never meant to supersede or prevent our own exertions. But as his quickening influence is a strong proof of his love and paternal regard for us, so should it be also a strong motive for our love and filial obedience to him.

This grace of the spirit is given liberally to

^k 2 Cor. iii. 5.

^l Phil. ii. 12, 13.

all

all men, who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus. Not in such a measure as to be usually perceived by sensible illuminations, but by gentle insinuations into the understandings of men ; thus opening their minds, and preparing them with such a teachable and humble disposition, as is always requisite for the saving knowledge of divine truths. These sacred truths it offers in such an advantageous light, impresses them with such strong convictions, removes the various prejudices that may oppose them, or counteracts their influence in so engaging a manner, as impels our wills to embrace them ; to admit their influence, suffer ourselves to be guided by their impression, and to cooperate with them in the resistance of sin, and the pursuit of holiness. The effectual workings of this spirit not only engage us in the love and practice of our duty, but curb our giddy and tumultuous passions, restrain our perverse inclinations, moderate our desires and affections, soften our tempers, compose our spirits, and quiet our hearts. And all these blessed effects are produced in us in a manner generally conformable to our own natural

tural impulses, agreeably to the dictates of our best reason, and without any violence to our own ordinary powers and usual abilities. In fine, to this holy influence of the spirit we owe the final completion, and probably the first movements in the work of our salvation without whose renewing power we, generally speaking, can do nothing, but must be quickened hereby to good works, to perform *the acceptable will of God*^m. He is our faithful monitor in all our lapses, our security in all dangers, our guide in all perplexities, our protector in all adversities, our support in all temptations, our friend and comforter in all the duties and paths of life.

Nor is this grace of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus denied to any Christians who humbly implore it, and conscientiously improve it. *The bodies of Christians are the temples of the Holy Ghost*ⁿ; and the spirit of Christ dwelleth in us, except we are reprobates^o. Nothing can prevent us from the benefits of

^m Rom. xii. 2. ⁿ 1 Cor. vi. 19. ^o 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

this

this grace, nothing will deprive us of it, but the wickedness and obstinate perverseness of our hearts. It is given us at our first admission into the Christian covenant ; it will be continued to us afterwards, as we study to demean ourselves, and to comport ourselves worthily for the residence and delight of this heavenly guest. It gradually retires from us, if we neglect it, or behave ourselves unsuitably for his presence. It is perhaps never totally withdrawn, unless sin has gained such a horrid ascendancy over the wretch, that the thoughts of his heart in the strictest sense are only evil continually. Where there is such a falling from grace, it must be impossible in the ordinary course of things to renew such abandoned sinners to repentance. But we trust such cases through the mercies of God will rarely happen, that Satan will seldom gain such an absolute dominion over any man ; so that no one should despair of recovering the forfeited favour of God upon his deep and sincere repentance ; no one, how grievous soever his sins may have been, should refuse to exert

exert his best endeavours, and pray for the grace of the spirit, if by any means he may be enabled to escape the wrath to come^p.

But Christians in general should be especially careful to invite and encourage the regenerating power of this spirit of God; should court his gentle illapses, cherish his quickening influences, hearken to his friendly suggestions, guard against his awful alarms, and improve his kind admonitions and counsels. Such decisive evidence should be studiously sought after in their minds, and constantly exhibited in their lives, as may infallibly mark them to be worthy of his visits, to be fit ha-

^p Though every encouragement possible should be held out to the returning sinner, yet it must be acknowledged, that a long wilful and obstinate impenitence must doubtless be a very dangerous case. If the note and observations that I have offered at p. 225, will have no effect on persons of this obdurate turn of mind, I would earnestly recommend to them to consider well that awful denunciation of the truest Wisdom, recorded, Prov. i. 24, &c. and to recollect also, that we are exhorted to *look diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God*, and that those who persist in rejecting the blessing, may find no place of repentance, though they should *seek it carefully with tears.* Heb. xii. 15, 17.

bitations

bitations of God through the Spirit^a. Who-soever is thus favoured will be careful to avoid all sin, will turn away his eyes from beholding vanity, will study to be purified in his flesh and in his mind, and to crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts ; will moreover manifest a sincere regard to the fruits of the spirit, and a genuine and constant cultivation of them in his life. Such fruits as are these, *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance*^b.

Every real Christian will be always striving to be animated with higher degrees and larger measures of this grace, so that he may grow thereby^c ; will be making continual advances in goodness, and endeavouring to perfect holiness in the fear of God. However splendid may have been his life and performances, he will not vainly imagine that he hath already attained *the measure of the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus*^d : but will go on in faith

^a Ephes. ii. 22.

^b 1 Pet. ii. 2.

^c Gal. v. 22, 23.

^d Ephes. iv. 13.

with

with steady perseverance, and forgetting those things which are past or behind, reach forwards towards the mark of the highest purity ; and be constantly praying for farther illuminations and a greater increase of strength, till he be fitted for an inheritance amongst them that are sanctified, till he obtain *the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*^u.

Such is the assistance which we receive from the Spirit of God ; and such the genuine indications of its real existence in us, that we duly cooperate with it, and are suitably improved by it.

Many false pretences to this grace are frequently assumed by the vain, many false appearances of it held forth by the deluded part of mankind. These deceits are at all times big with danger, and have oftentimes been productive of very fatal effects.^x Enthusiasts^x

^u Phil. iii. 14.

^x It were much to be wished, that all men, but especially persons of this cast, would consider themselves, not only as individuals, but as members of society ; and, in this country, as members of a Christian society, and of a church perhaps more wisely reformed than any protestant church in the world, more nicely poised between the corruptions of the church of

of every sort must be watched with nice attention, and guarded against with the utmost

Rome on the one hand, and the errors and phrenzies of fanaticism on the other. Now if persons are to live in society, they should conform their minds and opinions to such general rules and practices, as are essential to the very support of it. They must of course be subject to the higher powers, and obey them that have the rule over them, and submit themselves; as these are principles, not only agreeable to the dictates of their reason and conscience, but enforced by the revealed will of God. They should consider the general welfare as a point of the first and greatest importance, to be promoted by the wisest and surest methods; and hence should be careful of fapping a well-constructed edifice, devised for this purpose by the wisdom of our ancestors, or weakening the foundations of it, before they are perhaps sufficiently acquainted which the whole to be competent judges of its propriety and beauty, or sufficiently experienced to correct, or even point out its defects. They should attend duly to the following sentiments of the judicious Mr. Hooker. “ Except our own private, and but probable resolutions, be by the law of public determinations over-ruled, we take away all possibility of sociable life in the world. The best men otherwise are not always the best in regard of society. The reason whereof is, that the law of men’s actions is one, if they be respected only as men, and another when they are considered as parts of a politic body.—By following the law of private reason, where the law of public should take place, they breed disturbance.” Eccles. Pol. b. 1. p. 102.

These observations are certainly not meant with the least design to infringe on the right of a private and well-informed judgement, especially in matters of importance. But they are chiefly offered with a view to discourage and prevent divisions, and to promote unity and peace. And I am sorry to add, that the complexion of the times seems to call for them too loudly. The inclinations of many appear to be sadly warped by pride and self-will, to be too much addicted to change and innovation.

caution. Their zeal is generally of a very intemperate cast, which too frequently outruns their knowledge and their judgement. They seldom allow themselves time to discriminate properly; and hence many hot infusions, the result of their distempered and prejudiced fancies, are mistaken for the dictates of the spirit of God. Instead of stopping to examine them by the only unerring rule, whether they will produce the fruits of the spirit, whether they tend to improve and forward them in virtue and holiness, they too often suffer themselves to be impetuously borne away by them to the subversion of order, truth, public and private peace, and sometimes to the introduction of such mischievous effects, as may endanger the existence of civil society itself.

The greatest evils may be feared from the perversion and abuse of the most excellent things. Nothing can be more salutary, nothing more beneficial for us, than this grace of the spirit of Christ. Yet nothing is more vation, and to be more solicitous for matters of lesser moment, or even speculative notions, than for the more important truths and vital energies of the religion of Christ.

dangerous, or attended perhaps with more frequent and fatal mischiefs, than the perversion of this invaluable gift by deluded or designing men. Where a mischief of any sort creeps on gradually, it may be checked, or stopped, or diverted into a better channel; but where it forces itself with great impetuosity, and quickly swells into a torrent, it may surpass the art of man to restrain its bounds, if its first fallies are not guarded against with prudent attention and the most discreet vigilance. The Apostle St. John exhorts us to *try the spirits*, *whether they are of God*^y; bring them to the test of his doctrines, and the standard of his laws: And St. Paul has recounted among the works of the flesh a black catalogue of vices^z, which we are assured are not of the spirit; and in general we may conclude, that whatever is not agreeable to the spirit of a sound mind and a good heart, cannot proceed from the Spirit of God.

II. Nor is the intercession of our great High-priest confined to the gifts or graces,

^y 1 John iv. 1.

^z Gal. v. 19—21.

which

which we receive from his spirit on earth ; but he continually appears in the presence of God for us ; to perform the office of our advocate, to plead our cause, and his merits with the Father in that same nature, wherein he lived and died amongst the sons of men : which is the second consideration I proposed to reflect on.

There is such an infinite disparity between the divine and the human nature, between the great supreme Lord of all things and sinful dust and ashes, that we might well be afraid to appear before the presence of his dread Majesty, and anxious to enquire who shall intercede for us at the throne of his grace. Now neither the religion of nature, nor the institutions of Moses could satisfy men's minds in this respect. The multiplicity and variety of deities, to which the heathens addressed themselves, must shew that they were fully convinced of the necessity of some mode of intercession, though they were sadly bewildered and lost in the investigation of the true one. And though the law of Moses directed the priests to intreat the Almighty in behalf of his

S 3 people,

people, yet neither the sins of the priests, nor the mortality to which they were liable, could suffer the people to be satisfied with such intercessors, unless they were considered as representing some greater and better High-Priest to come.

But what the law, or *the ministration of death^a*, could not supply, *the bringing in of a better hope did^b*. By the Gospel we are assured, that our blessed Lord is seated at the right hand of God, to make intercession for those, who would come unto God by him, who through faith and patience desire to inherit his promised salvation. He is gone, *not into the holy places made with hands*, like the priests under the law; *but into Heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us^c*: where he is our mighty and prevailing Intercessor, exerting his interest with the Author of all goodness in our behalf.

Not that the Almighty Parent of all is of

^a 2 Cor. iii. 7. ^b Heb. vii. 19. ^c Heb. ix. 24.

himself

himself unwilling to grant our requests, if they are such, as his wisdom may judge proper and expedient for us: but he hath appointed us in this manner to make our addresses to him, as probably for other reasons best known to his all-seeing Providence, so for these obvious ones to us, to convince us of our own unworthiness, and to inspire us with a suitable reverence, and a confidential assurance of his favourable regard. And therefore our Lord still exercises his mediatorial office before the throne, presents our prayers and supplications to the King of Heaven, and obtains a favourable answer to all the real wants of his faithful servants, by pleading the efficacy of his merits, and the sufficiency of his ransom. All the succours we stand in need of, all the graces we can hope for, all the favours we could wish, our pardon, grace, and strength, are all derived down to us through his mediation, in whom the Father is well pleased. He knoweth all our weaknesses, temptations, distresses; and, having shared the same nature with us, is *touched*

with the feeling of our infirmities^a; and in that he hath suffered himself, being tempted, is able to succour all those that are tempted^b.

Nor is he less willing than able to undertake our cause, and to promote our suit. For he is our merciful and compassionate High-priest, always ready to receive our prayers, and to hearken unto our requests; who hath given us this comfortable assurance, that *whatsoever we shall ask the Father in his name, he will give it us^c*; as far as is consistent with his glory, and our real welfare. On which accounts we are exhorted *to come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need^d*.

Under the legal dispensation the priesthood was continually changing by reason of death; but our great High-priest hath an unchangeable priesthood, and continueth for evermore^e. His mediation therefore is so powerful, and of such constant and continual efficacy, that

^a Heb. iv. 15.

^e Ch. ii. 18.

^f John xv. 16.

^b Heb. iv. 16.

^g Ch. vii. 23, 24.

nothing

nothing more is wanting, to bring all who will duly avail themselves of it unto God.

Neither is there any other power to whom we are allowed to make our applications. *For as there is one, and but one God; so there is one, and but one, Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus*¹. He alone is mighty to save, and *he is able also to save to the uttermost those that come unto God by him*. We have no authority to ask the mediation or interposition of any other, have no foundation to think that departed spirits can hear our prayers, much less can answer our requests. Even the worshipping of angels is considered by St. Paul, as a voluntary humiliation that may beguile us of our reward^k. And the adoration of those of the same imperfect nature with ourselves, is a sort of will-worship, which is not supported by scripture, and which, however disguised by subtle distinctions, or palliated by artful evasions, or avowed by bold representations, is nothing less than

¹ 1 Tim. ii. 5.

^k Col. ii. 18.

idolatry.

idolatry¹. The commandment, as cited by our Saviour, is express and decisive; *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve*². For he will be very jealous, if we give his honour to another. How great or how highly esteemed soever, the creature may be, it must never usurp any share of the glory due to the Creator, *who is over all, the only wise God, blessed for evermore*³. There is therefore *no other name*, but that of our one mediator Jesus Christ, *whereby we can be saved*⁴; and by Him alone *we have access through one spirit unto the Father*⁵.

III. But we are not yet arrived to the full sense of the mediatorial kingdom, according to the scripture account of it: for our blessed Lord not only assists us with his grace, and strengthens us with his interest, but farther

¹ It is mentioned by Puffendorf, that Leo Isaurus quite ejected images out of the churches, because the adoration of them was wholly degenerated into idolatry; and as to the outward appearance, the Saints were more regarded than God himself. Introd. to Europe, p. 405.

² Luke iv. 8. ³ Rom. ix. 5. ⁴ Acts iv. 12.

⁵ Ephes. ii. 18.

protects

protects and supports us with his omnipotence or unlimited authority.

Many are the adversaries, which the church of Christ must contend with in this its state of warfare; many the assaults which it hath had to conflict with, and which it must still encounter, from wicked spirits, as well as from wicked men. Sin and Satan are the principal enemies of our salvation. These our mighty Redeemer will so far curb and restrain, that they shall be no prevailing impediment to our eternal interest, if we will manfully exert ourselves, and under his banners strenuously aim at victory.

Nothing shall ever prevail against the church of Christ, how many things soever may remain to oppose it. Neither the influence of sin or of the Devil will be entirely abolished, till the consummation of all things, when every enemy shall be put under his feet. These enemies however, though not yet finally destroyed by the Son of God, are subdued unto him: so that sin shall no longer reign over
the

the mortal bodies of his elect, nor the prince of the darkness of this world exercise any commanding authority over those that will live godly in Christ Jesus.

So far these foes are already put under the footstool of the Mediator, that they can have no power over his faithful servants, nor injure those who *fight the good fight of faith*, that they may *lay hold of eternal life*¹. *The Lord knoweth*, and always secureth, *them that are his*², those that naming the name, and embracing the faith, of Christ, depart from iniquity. *The souls of the righteous are continually in the hand of God, and their hope is full of immortality*³: and those that by his grace are enabled to overcome all the dangers and temptations of the world, are the approved of God, whom he hath found worthy for himself, and such hath God the Father sealed. Though an host should assail them, yet will they not be afraid; the sovereign influence of Christ will guard and protect them in all ad-

¹ 1 Tim. vi. 12.

² 2 Tim. ii. 19.

³ Wisd. iii. 1, 4.

versities,

verities, and the Lord will remember them
*in that day, when he maketh up his jewels*¹,
and they shall inherit his glory.

But upon those that refuse the offers of mercy, and will not have the Son of God to reign over them, the authority of sin and Satan obtains still too sure an influence. The children of disobedience, over whom sin reigneth unto death, yield themselves a prey unto that malicious spirit, who is continually wandering abroad on the earth, *seeking whom he may devour*². He hath indeed no power over us without our consent: but if any, instead of resisting him, resign themselves to his sway, will abdicate their true Lord and Master, and suffer other lords to have dominion over them, they must be subject to his tyranny, and partake of his misery, whose vassals and slaves they are. And it is but just, that such as obstinately refuse to honour Christ by their obedience and voluntary submission, should contribute to the tremendous glory of his

¹ Mal. iii. 17.

² 1 Pet. v. 8.

Majesty

Majesty by their final doom and awful sentence, confining them to that *everlasting punishment, which is prepared for the Devil and his angels*^x. Thus *horrible will be the end of the unrighteous generation*^y, thus terribly will they display his aversion to sin, and the fearful resentment of the abused goodness and justice of God.

As our present existence is a state of tryal and discipline, the enemies of our salvation must continue with us, till those that are approved shall be made manifest. *The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death*^z; and at that dread period, when death shall be no more, or *shall be swallowed up in victory*^a, all the powers that oppose themselves, shall be at an end likewise. Then, when death and hell are entirely vanquished, and multitudes of the true sons of God are brought unto glory, the mediatorial authority itself shall be completed and cease; the grand scheme of our redemption being finally closed, and those, who are

^x Matt. xxv. 41.

^y Wisd. iii. 19.

^z 1 Cor. xv. 26.

^a Ver. 54.

found

found worthy, admitted to reign in the realms of bliss for ever. When, upon a review of the mighty power of God displayed in the salvation of mankind through the satisfaction and atonement of Christ, the whole host of heaven will loudly proclaim, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.* *Blessing therefore and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever*^b.

We have now finished our proposed plan, and, under the guidance of the scriptures, given an imperfect sketch of the mediatorial kingdom, from the fall of man, or the loss of his original bliss through sin, to the completion of his recovery and full reinstatement into the favour of God, through the mercies and merits of the fore-ordained Deliverer: the design of whose final dispensation is, *that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so should*

^b Rev. v. 12, 13.

grace

grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Long had men laboured and bewildered themselves to find out a remedy for the evil of sin, and the way to peace and happiness. But their reasonings upon the existence of a future state were so intricate or precarious, that no efforts of their own could discover the certainty, much less ascertain the path, of everlasting life. So far indeed the mind and will of God were made known to men, that at no period does the Almighty Father of Lights seem to have left himself without witness; and in every age of the old world his faithful servants had a sufficient share of knowledge to enliven their hopes, and induce them to take refuge in the prospect of his promised mercies; which there was always reason to believe would be shewn to those, who should live in the faith and fear of God, and the conscientious observance of his known laws. But there appears to have been so

• Rom. v. 21.

much

much of human weakness, intermixed with their prospects and consolations, that the hopes of the most part were then gloomy and uncertain, of the best not without some allays of fear and imperfection. As they could open no fountain for sin and for uncleanness, they could not draw the waters of eternal life.

Behold, then, what manner of love the Father bath bestowed upon us⁴, to whom life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel. To us it is given to know this mystery of the kingdom of Heaven, to hear him, who alone had the words of eternal life, to have the reality of our future existence made as clear and plain to us as matter of fact, as sure as the Word of God. This, were it no more, is a glorious subject for our most elevated contemplations; and the mind cannot but exult in the thought, that it shall be for ever. But it is indeed much more; it immediately influences our practice by setting the rule of our conduct beyond all possibility

⁴ 1 John iii. 1.

T of

of doubt, and the motives to our observance of it, beyond every shadow of objection. So that what must otherwise have been darkness to our steps, what we shall be hereafter, is now become the light of our life.

In proportion to our uncertainty concerning any end, we are always apt to fluctuate and mistake in the application of the means. The soul of man, how willing soever to assert its prerogative to govern the inferior part of our constitution, can but ill maintain its superiority, while passion and appetite dispute the question; whether the pure reason of things should be the only guide of a being not purely rational; whilst the solicitations of pleasure and pain, and the views of present interest, point out a very different course, and urge a deviation from the rugged ways of truth and right.

But Eternity being once put in the scale, the motives of pleasure, pain, and interest, all come over with an united weight to the side of virtue. We now indeed see what is man,

man, and wherefore is he ; what is his good, and what is his evil ; and know what a wretched bargain we shou'd make, shou'd we gain the whole world, and lose our own souls^c. We have now therefore a victory, which overcometh the world, even that faith, which is the evidence of things not seen^f, the conviction that the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal^g. We may now, in whatsoever condition we are here for a time, under all temptations, and in all afflictions, whether of life or death, support and comfort ourselves, and one another, with these words, We shall not only be for ever, but shall ever be with the Lord^h.

Wherefore as God hath thus sent his Son to bless us, let this blessing be not defeated in its design, of turning us away from our iniquities : but let every one that hath this hope strive to purify himself, even as God is pure ; let him give all diligence to add to his faith

^c Matt. xvi. 26. ^f Heb. xi. 1. ^g 2 Cor. iv. 18.

^h 1 Thess. iv. 18.

every

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*every virtue, always abounding in the work of
the Lord, since we know that our labour shall
not be in vain in the Lord¹.*

¹ Cor. xv. 58.

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